MODERN RIDING AND HORSE EDUCATION

MAJOR NOEL BIRCH

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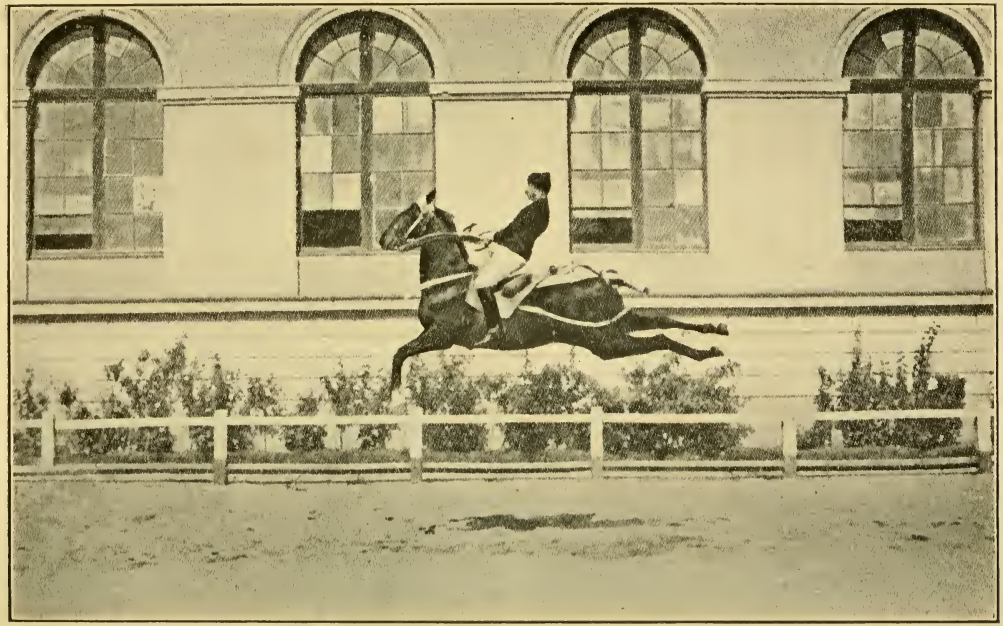

Plate I.—The "Cabriole"

MODERN RIDING

AND

HORSE EDUCATION

BY

MAJOR NOEL BIRCH

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INTRODUCTION

By MAJOR-GEN. SIR A. N. ROCHFORT, K.C.B., C.M.G.

Late Inspector Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery, Great Britain.

THE scientific treatment of the art of teaching riding is no novelty, as the works in many languages which have been consulted by Major Birch bear ample testimony, but the variety of views expressed therein by the authors is confusing, and it is apparent that the methods which have from time to time been adopted and then abandoned, only to be rediscovered as something new, partake rather of the nature of haphazard expedients than of principles established on a well-thought-out foundation. That a similar divergence of views and practice now exists amongst authorities on the subject is equally true.

Under these circumstances I venture to think that the present work will be found most valuable; the author has by exhaustive research

rescued from books no longer generally available much that is good, while his reasons for not agreeing with some of the views expressed by these writers are convincing; and, last but not least, he has shown clearly in Sections XV and XVI what the aim of the instructor in riding should be, and the best means to that end.

There is, I think, no portion of the book more interesting than Section II, where he deals with the evolution of the present-day seat on a horse, and shows how the pendulum, after oscillating between the extreme of the "Haute Ecole," or straight-legged seat, and its opposite as practised by Tod Sloan and his imitators, both of which are unsuited to general purposes, has finally come to rest at the hunting seat. We ought therefore to hear no more of the military seat as such; — there never have been any good reasons for such a distinction, and it would be particularly undesirable at present, when the military net is spread to catch many that can never be trained under purely military auspices.

During the time I held the appointment of Inspector of Royal Horse and Field Artillery, I had

exceptional opportunities of observing the results of the instructional methods initiated by Major Birch and carried out under his direction; and although it is not contended that his method offers the only means of teaching a man to ride, the system is certainly a very efficient one.

At a time when science, by adapting the means of mechanical locomotion to road transport, has already done so much to emancipate horses from some of the drudgery of which they have hitherto been the victims, it is opportune to further enlist its aid in training them for the higher functions for which in the future they will be more generally used. The art of horse-training in this country has been too long neglected, as a result of which the waste in prematurely broken-down and vicious animals is probably greater than is generally realized.

Natural aptitude and the sporting instincts hereditary in our race have done much to minimize the necessity of scientifically training the man, but it is not so with the horse; it is to be hoped that Part II of this work will therefore appeal the more forcibly to that large section of the public which is interested in the production and training of young

horses, and that those who peruse its pages will conclude that there is no short cut to horse-training, but that, on the contrary, the intellectual and physical training of the horse must commence when young and be progressive.

PREFACE

I introduce this volume to the American public with some diffidence. The most successful jockeys of recent years on the English turf have come from America; only two years ago (1909) America beat England handsomely at polo, and this year (1911) she has repeated the victory after a hard-fought struggle. My justification must be that quite lately there has been a renewal of interest in the subject of equitation amongst the two great branches of the English-speaking race, which is no doubt largely due to the International Horse Shows which have been held everywhere during the last four or five years. These have brought home to us that Continental riders are not only as much at home in the saddle as ourselves, but that in the matter of bringing the training of man and horse to a high pitch of perfection for specific objects we have a good deal to learn from them, and this in spite of the fact that as yet no foreign nation could hope to put up a team of polo players to defeat the American winners of 1909, or any four men to beat an equal number of Eng-

land's hardest riders across the Leicestershire pastures.

In an article on "The New Army School of Horsemanship" (Scribner's Magazine, July, 1909), by Major T. Bentley Mott, U. S. A., the following passages occur:—"The fact is, the United States have long ceased to be a nation of horsemen whose boys learn to ride as a matter of course, just as they learn to walk; and yet, with considerable blindness, the public and the press have continued to assume that for military purposes all Americans are born with a knowledge of horsemanship . . . . . On the other hand, England has never had a school of horsemanship such as Saumur, Hanover, or Pinerolo.

"England and Ireland still remain par excellence the land of horses and horsemen, and the number of men who ride and handle horses constitute in those countries a fair proportion of the population, and the mounted services are recruited in officers and men considerably from people who have always ridden . . . . . Nevertheless, the British are now awakening to the fact that in the matter of army horsemanship—certainly in its refinements—

they are being left behind by nations far less favored in the way of raw material."

This book, which I trust will also interest the accomplished horseman, is especially addressed to the pupil, whether boy or man, and to his instructors, and may possibly prove useful to the lady who wishes to adopt the cross-legged seat. Though many of the illustrations show men in uniform, I must impress upon the reader that this is no military text-book; soldier and civilian now sit and ride alike in England, and there is every reason why they should, as I trust the following pages will show. I feel it necessary to emphasize this point, as there appears to have been much comment at the New York National Horse Show of 1909 on the different styles of riding of the American and English officers; the former being said to have the military and the latter the hunting seat.

In the year 1905 I was appointed to command the Riding Establishment at Woolwich, and found myself responsible for the training of instructors in equitation for the Royal Regiment of Artillery and of the Cadets at the Royal Military Academy, who pass into the Artillery and Engineers.

Few men can have had the exceptional opportunities I enjoyed of putting every known method, English and foreign, of teaching riding and training horses to a practical test; there were rarely less than two hundred budding horsemen under instruction at a time, who were replaced as they became efficient, and at least sixty young horses passed through the Establishment yearly.

Since leaving Woolwich I have visited all the principal Cavalry Schools of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, France, and Belgium, and have seen many fine riders and well trained horses.

There are so very many books on equitation that it has of course been necessary to cover old ground, but I believe that some features of the science—for science it is—have been treated in a new way. No book, as far as I am aware, recommends the system of teaching riding advocated in these pages, which I, and others who have tried it, have proved to ensure quickness and safety, with the minimum of discomfort to both horse and rider during the process.

In Part II, devoted to horse-training, I have endeavored to impress on the reader the value of

early handling and development of the horse's mind, and have gone fully into the subject of permanent horse-balance and its extreme importance, a thing which is not very generally understood.

I have dealt with both riding and training from a more or less historical point of view, not only to give instructors some idea of bygone ways of riding and of teaching equitation and to point out why they fell into disuse, but also to prevent the possible reintroduction of obsolete methods which time and experience have proved to be faulty. I have freely quoted from equine literature where I have thought it to be desirable, but it must not be inferred that the authors mentioned are the only ones I have studied. As this book is intended to be little more than a handbook, I have not burdened it with a bibliography of all the works I have consulted.

Without the assistance of my successor, Major the Hon. W. Sclater Booth, R. H. A., and his kindness in continuing experiments in the Riding Establishment in proof of various theories we both wished to advance, several parts of this book could never have been written. To the staff of the Riding Establishment, who have been every ready to try new de-

partures, my thanks are also due; as also to Brigadier General H. de la P. Gough, commanding 3rd Cavalry Brigade, Ireland, the Messrs. Miller of polo fame, Mr. R. Donaldson-Hudson, and to Mr. C. S. Jackson, M. A., Instructor of Mathematics and Mechanics at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich; also to Major G. H. A. White, R. H. A., for some of the illustrations.

I am much indebted to the Editors of the Royal Artillery Journal and the Cavalry Journal for their very kind permission to reproduce a portion of some articles I published in these periodicals, and in the case of the former to use some of the plates which illustrated them. I am also much indebted to the proprietor of the Field newspaper for a similar permission.

NOEL BIRCH.

NAVAL AND MILITARY CLUB,
PICCADILLY,
LONDON.
12th JUNE, 1911.

PART I

ON TEACHING RIDING

I

ON THE NECESSITY FOR APPLYING SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES TO THE TEACHING OF RIDING AND THE TRAINING OF HORSES

I

ON THE NECESSITY FOR APPLYING SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES TO THE TEACHING OF RIDING AND THE TRAINING OF HORSES

"The most exalted seat in the world is the saddle of a swift horse, and the best companion for all time is a book."

Arab Poetry.

ENGLAND has long been behind other European nations in certain branches of the equestrian art, and rather despises foreigners for the time and trouble they bestow on riding instruction and on the higher education of the horse. General von Bernhardi says that "Anglo-maniacs and faddists still seek to exercise an influence the reverse of favorable in this respect." France and Germany, to quote only two countries, aim at making both the horse's and the man's training as perfect and as comprehensive as possible.

Riding for spectacular purposes, whether in the riding school or the show-ring, is unlikely ever

to appeal to the average Englishman and American who hunts and plays polo; and we can take it that what in old days was called the "Great Saddle," and now "advanced Haute Ecole" work, is of no practical value, nor do we meet such jumps as the "piano," and three rails of progressive heights, so placed that they must be jumped as one obstacle, outside the show ring. We learn, however, from the foreigner the value of training both man and horse systematically for a particular object, as against our happy-go-lucky methods; whatever success these may meet with being really in advance of their deserts.

The Messrs. Miller, at Rugby, train ponies as well as, if not better than, anybody else in the world, and in some other individual cases excellent results are obtained; but speaking generally, the farmer's son handles the colt with but little idea of how to set about it, and the dealer's lad will probably complete the breaking—for education it can hardly be called—the horse being then sold as a finished hunter or hack. If he is properly balanced and has a good mouth the purchaser is exceptionally lucky, and if the animal answers to the leg he is luckier still. An

Irish dealer at the Dublin Horse Show once told me that he had a wonderful horse to sell me; the remark caused no surprise, but I had the curiosity to ask why the animal was wonderful. "Your honor," was the reply, "he can walk, trot, and gallop, and there are very few horses in the show that can do that." If we take the brains and time that are put into horse-training abroad as a guide, it is really surprising that so many horses at home should be able to walk, trot, and gallop in proper form. Many so-called trained animals which are sold out of England or Ireland to go abroad are treated as unbroken on their arrival unless over six years old, and are trained from the beginning.

As far as the teaching of riding is concerned, our boys are generally taught by the family coachman, often a poor horseman and with no theoretical knowledge; a typical case of the blind leading the blind.

I recently visited the French Cavalry School at Saumur, amongst others, which is the largest establishment of its kind in the world, not excepting Hanover, and witnessed a performance given in the riding school by the Ecuyers (picked riding instruc-

tors). They rode in buckskin saddles, having rolls in front of the flap, and a large roll behind the seat; the lower part of the leg was drawn back, and in many cases the knee was not touching the saddle. The make of the saddle and the grip below the knee maintained the rider's seat when the horse did violent and extravagant exercises such as the "courbette" (rearing) "croupade" (kicking out behind), and the "cabriole" (Plate I) (jumping off the ground and extending the fore and hind legs). The French claim that this seat is necessary in order that the "aids" may be applied delicately, but lady exponents of the Haute Ecole perform the work just as well on trained horses, although they cannot apply the leg as a man does.

I was not at all struck with the seat, and although I was privileged to see no jumping, a careful examination of many photographs taken on the spot proved that it is abandoned in favor of our hunting seat for more practical work, and a very firm "assiette" they seem to have attained.

This riding-school performance is frequently carried out with the object of demonstrating to embryo instructors to what a high pitch horse-train-

ing can be carried, and of its kind it is perfectly excellent. The horses are first of all taught their work tied between two pillars, and without men on their backs. Some of the aids employed can hardly be called delicate, even when the education is complete; for example, to make the horse kick up behind, the riders gives him a severe cut with the whip just above his hocks. Doubtless these exercises develop useful muscles in the horse and ensure his balance at slow paces, as no unbalanced horse could perform them, but we need not copy either this training or what is considered the necessary seat for it; the muscles of the horse can be devolped by far simpler means, and balancing is part of the animal's ordinary education. It is only fair, however, to add that these same horses are said to be able to travel over four miles of stiffish made-up country, the highest practical test possible in France, where natural fences of any sort are the exception.

The only Haute Ecole exercise I have ever heard of with a specific object peculiar to itself is the Spanish trot, which is said to cure stumbling; but as Mr. Swire has recently told us that horses possessing this accomplishment are apt to do it unasked when wait-

ing their turn at a fence out hunting and to strike other horses, its all-round value is doubtful. Imagine one's feelings at the covert side if one's horse did the "courbette" spontaneously, and the language of one's friends if he began the "croupade" in a narrow gate-way! I think plain people and ordinary horsemen will agree with me that it is better to have an animal whom no power could induce either to rear or kick, than one trained to these evil practices.

From a recent conversation with a Spanish and a French officer concerning "show jumping," I learn that the thirst for extremely fancy obstacles is the outcome of some years' training in this particular sphere abroad. Fresh jumps are invented directly horses become clever at those in use; let us hope that the limit of the animal's powers will shortly be reached. I was, however, informed by the Commandant of Saumur that the progressive training of horses and riders for jumping had almost entirely eliminated accidents.

What we in England should aim at now is the application of scientific principles to the ordinary teaching of riding and the training of horses, and

in this we can take a lesson from abroad without going into any extravagances. After the International Horse Show at Olympia (London) in 1909 the following interesting comments appeared in a French official journal, after many encomiums on English practical horsemanship:—"They (Englishmen) fail in that *nothing* (ce rien) which may be so easily learnt in the school .... (and which) consists in those principles of equitation by which a horse may be taught to go *pleasantly* wherever, whenever, and however one wishes, and at whatever pace is desired." Let us be satisfied when we have arrived at this and go no further; it is not necessary, nor can it be advantageous, to teach a horse for example to "canter false," one of the tests exacted at the Brussels International Horse Show of 1910.

Towards the end of the reign of James I serious efforts appear to have been made to improve horse training and riding in England. Lord Mostyn possesses an MS. bearing date 1618, in which the Lord President of the Council of the Marches urges the Deputy-Lieutenants of Flint to found a Riding Academy out of the rates, where horsemanship, "a necessary and useful part of every gentleman's

breeding, and a thing of high estimation throughout the most flourishing and best governed part of the world," could be properly taught and horses trained. It is fair to assume that this movement was not confined to one county. The Deputy-Lieutenants, however, strongly objected on the score of expense, and history tells us that it was the custom at that time, and later on in the same century, for young gentlemen of England to go to France and there perfect themselves in riding.

In 1761 Henry Earl of Pembroke published a book entitled "Military Equitation, or a Method of Breaking Horses and Teaching Soldiers to Ride"; it ran through four editions if not more, and on October 1, 1793, was accepted by the Adjutant-General of the British Army and issued as the first text-book on the subject. The work is of absorbing interest, and contains many hits at the equitation of that time, especially from a military point of view, some of which apply in a minor degree to the present day. On the necessity for study his lordship writes as follows:

"I must urge the necessity of forming by reading, and serious study, as well as by much constant

practice, proper riding-masters for the Army; though I am thoroughly apprized, as the celebrated Mr. Bourgelat observes, that an ill-founded prejudice partially directs the judgment of the greater part of those people, who call themselves connoisseurs. I know full well that they suppose that practice alone can insure perfection, and that in their arguments in favor of this their deplorable system, they reject with scorn all books, and all authors: but Equitation is confessedly a science; every science is founded upon principles, and they must indispensably be necessary, because what is truly just and beautiful cannot depend upon chance. What indeed is to be expected from a man, who has no other guide than a long-continued practice, and who must of necessity labor under very great uncertainties? Incapable of accounting rationally for what he does, it must be impossible for him to enlighten me, or communicate to me the knowledge which he fancies himself possessed of. How then can I look upon such a man as a master? On the other hand, what advantages may I not obtain from the instructions of a person whom theory enables to comprehend and feel the effects of his slightest operations, and

who can explain to me such principles as an age of constant practice only could never put me into a way of acquiring? Equitation does, to be sure, require also a constant, and an assiduous exercise. Habit, and a continual practice will go a great way in all exercises, which depend on the mechanics of the body, but, unless this mechanism is properly fixed, and supported on the solid basis of theory, errors will be the inevitable consequence. The knowledge of a horse is vulgarly thought so familiar, and the means of dressing him so general and so common, that you can hardly meet with a man who does not flatter himself that he has succeeded in both points, and while masters, who sacrifice every hour of their life to attain knowledge, still find themselves immerged in darkness and obscurity, men the most uninformed imagine that they have attained the summit of perfection, and in consequence thereof suppress the least inclination of learning even the first elements, a blind, and a boundless presumption is the characteristic of ignorance; the fruits of long study, and application amount to a discovery of fresh difficulties, at the sight of which a diligent man, very far from over-rating his own merit, redoubles his efforts in pursuit of fresh knowledge."

Truer words on the subject were seldom penned, and all that Lord Pembroke advises for Army Instructors applies equally well to teachers and to many horse-trainers outside the Army. The Briton and the American have, as a rule, better legs for the saddle than any Continental European, and should settle into it more easily than he, and therefore excel in every branch of equitation. Some of the best horses in the world are bred in the British Isles and in America, and the only pity of it is that so many of the former are allowed to go abroad, though defenders of the practice no doubt rightly urge that this is an incentive to breeding valuable stock.

Lord Pembroke's advice, which presumably was that a scientific school of equitation should be established for the Army, similar to those now found in Vienna, Pinerolo, Hanover, Ypres, and Saumur, all of which I have seen, was not followed for over a hundred years, and history shows us the result so far as the Army is concerned. In 1802 a Hanoverian named Captain Quist was appointed to command the Riding House at Woolwich, with a view to teaching the Artillery to ride. In 1815 a Prussian riding master was sent over to instruct our Cavalry.

and in 1904 a deputation of English officers visited Saumur and found plenty to learn there. Two cavalry officers were lately sent to Saumur in order to qualify as instructors for our Cavalry School at Netheravon, which came into existence after the Boer War. Let us hope that in 2011 we shall be in a position to take pupils from other nations.

The professional civilian teacher of riding is very often a retired soldier, so those outside the Army should eventually profit from Government money judiciously spent at Netheravon or the Riding Establishment. As in James I's time, the formation of scientific civilian schools in different parts of the country is out of the question at present from a financial point of view, as there is no demand for them; but I have great hopes that in course of time the British riding public will become alive to the fact that well-made horses are uncommon, and that no hunting man, breeder, or horse dealer can go anywhere to learn how to train them and at the same time improve his own riding; or to have his children taught equitation in a thorough and practical manner.

II

SEATS

II

SEATS

"He grew unto his seat;
And to such wond'rous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorps'd and demy-natured
With the brave beast."

Hamlet, Act iv., Scene 7.

BEFORE putting the pupil on the horse, it will be as well to consider firstly what he has to be taught, and secondly the easiest way of doing it; when these two problems have been solved the work can be undertaken with confidence and with a knowledge of what to look for and what to avoid during the process of teaching a man to ride.

Although differing considerably as to the best method of instruction, experts nearly all agree that the first three things to go for are balance, knee and thigh grip, and getting the pupil split up and well down into his saddle. The use of the hand and of the lower part of the leg may well be left until the pupil has a more or less firm and balanced seat.

Although balance and grip are both component parts of a man's seat on horseback, yet "seat" itself is so distinct a subject, from the point of view of the various styles in use in historical and modern times, with the reasons governing their adoption, as to merit separate consideration, and instructors of riding should have some knowledge of how the evolution of the present-day seat on a horse was accomplished. Many of the well-known writers on horsemanship have alluded more or less fully to the subject, but in so discursive a manner as not to bring clearly before the reader the gradual changes which have taken place in the accepted manner of sitting a horse, all of which have had their justification in the conditions obtaining at the time.

Four varieties of seat are mentioned in the standard works on riding—the Haute Ecole seat, with the leg straight; the military seat, with the leg slightly bent; the hunting seat, with the leg rather higher; and what is variously described by old authors as the Turkish, Eastern, or ancient Spanish seat, which now figures in a more exaggerated form as the American flat-racing seat, with the thigh practically horizontal. It is a mistake to suppose

that the bent knee came in with the stirrups: stirrups were not invented until the fifth century, and were not common till the twelfth, yet history proves clearly that the ancient Eastern nations rode with the leg bent. Bas-reliefs in the Assyrian section of the British Museum show the seats in vogue in the eighth and ninth centuries B. C., and further evidence is furnished by the Parthenon frieze, *tempo* 440 B. C. In the relief which represents horsemen flying before the Assyrians, the rider's knee is nearly as high as it would be in the present-day racing seat.

Set a man who has never ridden before on to a horse which is standing still, and you will find that he sits in practically the same way as the warrior in another of the bas-reliefs, of about 750 B. C.; which goes to prove that this position, which is neither more nor less than the present-day hunting seat, is a natural one, and that all others are acquired. The early riders probably adopted it as being the most comfortable for both man and horse on long-distance journeys, and when crossing rough country. From an anatomical point of view they were correct, that is to say, if the reader agrees with me in thinking that a man should sit in his

saddle and not ride on his fork. The two "sitting bones" in front, and the sacrum behind the pelvis, form the triangular base of the seat, as Sidney so graphically explains, and the angle of the thighs depends on their make and shape and on the width of the pelvis. The Eastern nations have persisted in this seat, and I will endeavor to show why Europeans adopted the straight-legged seat for a period, and why they have now returned to riding shorter.

War has always influenced the art of horsemanship, especially in the West. It is, therefore, not surprising to find the great warrior and student of equitation Xenophon, who was born 430 B. C., writing as follows in his treatise on riding:

"Whether he uses a cloth [1] or rides upon the bare back we should not have him sit as one who drives a chariot, but as if he were standing erect with his legs somewhat astride, for thus his thighs will cling closer to his horse, and being upright, he will be better able to wield his lance and shield with more force."

This "war seat" did not become common in Europe for some time. A statue of Caligula on

[1] The Greeks used "clothes" or housings, and not saddles.

horseback, date about 37 A. D., which is in the British Museum, shows him riding with a bent knee, and I am of opinion that the seat never entirely superseded the old one for road work and the chase.

The straight-legged seat was undoubtedly general on the Continent in the early Middle Ages, when knights wore heavy armor and rode in massive high-peaked and deeply-curved saddles (Tozer), which, indeed, allowed of no other posture. It has been freely stated that the straight-legged seat was the *outcome* of the high-peaked saddle, which became popular as giving a good support to the rider if he were struck. Xenophon's treatise proves the fallacy of this theory, because he recommended the position at a time when only a cloth was used for a saddle. The Normans in the Bayeux tapestry are represented as riding with a perfectly straight leg, and probably introduced the practice into England; as although some historians aver that the Saxons were in the habit of riding, they undoubtedly fought on foot at Hastings, to which fact King William may have owed his victory (Tozer). The reason why the mediæval knights all used this seat in battle and

in the lists was probably that not only did it enable them to put more weight into the thrust, but they were less liable to overbalance backwards after the collision than if their knees had been bent and used as the pivot.

On the experience of the knights in armor (Sidney) the "High School of Horsemanship" was founded, and carried to fantastic perfection in England and on the Continent during the period when armor had been reduced to a breast-plate and back-plate. Exercises much resembling those of the more florid Haute Ecole school were, however, common amongst the Arab nations from the earliest times, and may be witnessed to-day at what are known as Arab "fantasias," and these were and are carried out with the knee very much bent. It is possible that, during the long intercourse between the Easterns and the knighthood of Europe at the time of the Crusades, the Europeans may have adopted some of the methods of their antagonists and sought to rival their feats of horsemanship, though without imitating their manner of sitting a horse.

The Cavalier of a later date rode straight-legged to war, and, according to contemporary writers,

found it "most elegant and graceful" in peace. Manège riding of a high order formed one of the principal recreations of the gentlemen of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who were encouraged to excel by the interest of the fair sex. In this they closely resembled the young Romans, who were accustomed to ride before the ladies merely to display their equestrian skill and address, in the hopes of thereby winning their favor.

There can be no doubt that, with the improvement in English agriculture and the consequent enclosing of the country, a more natural school of riders arose amongst gentlemen sportsmen and yeomen, who discovered the difficulties of negotiating fences if they rode with a straight leg, the principal one being that, unless the knee is farther to the front than the body, the latter will pitch forward when the horse lands. Not only was the seat less secure when jumping with long stirrups, but if the horse pecked the rider was liable to injury, as he could not clear the pommel. Xenophon's directions for jumping are interesting in this connection. He advocates catching hold of the mane to avoid giving the horse a job in the mouth, which goes to prove that his method

of riding was unsuitable for jumping; and Newcastle remarks: "Nothing disorders a Horse's Mouth more than Leaps."

Until fox-hunting became general, towards the close of the eighteenth century,[1] it was not considered correct to ride with a bent knee. Writing in 1805, Adams says that "although gentlemen may give their horses a breathing in this style of riding in the park, or occasionally over a piece of common by the roadside, yet it is not becoming or genteel to practise it much on the road."

Baucher (*circa* 1850), and every other past master of Haute Ecole—excepting Fillis, if we are to judge by his illustrations—rode with a comparatively speaking straight leg, and claimed that this seat alone gave that nice equilibrium, light hand, and power of leg so indispensable in working the horse in advanced manège riding.

Although Haute Ecole training never seems to have been generally popular after hunting commenced over enclosed countries, and is practically

[1] In "Sports and Pursuits of the English," we read that hounds were never entered *solely* to fox till 1750; but in his "Encyclopædia of Rural Sports," Blaine says that the first real steady pack of foxhounds was established in the Western part of England about 1730.

unknown in England to-day, up to about 1850 the majority of writers on the subject of equitation were agreed that the straight-legged seat was the best, and the only one to be recommended. These authors were not generally hunting men; the latter gentlemen, with few exceptions, thought school riding and scientific horse-training unworthy of their serious consideration.

The reader may well ask the pertinent question, how came this seat to be the general one in America? and why does the cow-puncher still retain it? I will endeavor to supply answers to both questions. Horses became extinct in America before the beginning of the historic period (von Zittel) and were first reintroduced by the Spaniards in 1537; some of these escaped and ran wild, and by 1580 their descendants had spread over the continent.

It seems only natural to infer that with the horse came the seat of the period, and it has been retained to this day by the riders of the plains. It is well suited to the horse and to the work of the cow-puncher. He has to cross no fences, trotting is unknown to him, and as he pivots on his fork he can bend and turn at will to throw his rope. Excepting

for jumping, the balance of the body must be more perfect in this position than it is in the hunting seat, as the pivot is higher.

The straight-legged seat is one to grow into and not to acquire after manhood is reached.

In Tyndale's book on military riding (1797) the soldier is shown astride his horse with a perfectly straight leg, and the writer states that the plate is perfectly true to life; but I am led to infer that this position was only retained in the riding school and in peace training under the eye of the Riding Master. Lord Pembroke, in the manual issued by the War Office four years before this date, recommended a seat between the Haute Ecole and the hunting with the idea of combining the advantages of both, but apparently this had not had any appreciable effect on the soldier's seat. This will be readily understood by those who have been brought up in the Army and recognize the conservatism of Riding Instructors. During the Napoleonic wars, when nearly every soldier became a campaigner, the straight-legged seat, and also Lord Pembroke's, seem to have been abandoned for the hunting seat, as we find that in 1815, after the declaration of

peace, a Prussian riding master was employed under the patronage of the Prince Regent to drill our Cavalry to ride with a perfectly straight leg again. This must have been carried to an extreme, as many men were ruptured in the process. Gibbon, a military writer (1825), tells us that every man's thigh should lie at an angle of 20 degrees from the perpendicular (as if we were all built precisely alike!), and says that any deviation from this position exposes the rider to some danger or other.

And now ensued a long period during which there was little or no change in the soldier's seat on a horse in peace time, although some regiments appear to have ridden with shorter stirrups than others; and the outbreak of the South African War in 1899 found our mounted troops sitting on their forks, the exception being the Mounted Infantry, first raised some thirty years ago, who were taught their equitation by combatant officers, and rode with the knee bent. Men who went through the Riding Master's course at the Cavalry Depôt at Canterbury just before this war have told me that they were ordered to have their spur-rests fitted low on a high heel in order to give their leg an even straighter appear-

ance. It may surprise some of my readers to be told that the Cavalry Schools of France, Italy, and Austria had already adopted the hunting seat.

The campaign in South Africa again proved, as the Peninsular War appeared to have done, that the straight-legged seat was most wearing to both man and horse on the march, and quite unsuitable for crossing obstacles.

Mobility, *i. e.,* getting on to the battle-field, is and must be in the future of far more importance than greater efficiency for possible shock action on arrival. This latter advantage was not acknowledged by the Eastern nations, who have never been heavy men on heavy horses and charged knee to knee. Circling independently on the plain, they claim that shortened stirrups give the striker a longer reach. Berenger, writing when the straight-legged seat was most fashionable in Western Europe, said that the Turks rode with their stirrups so short that their knees were almost as much bent as when sitting on their hams on a sofa, in order to "collect themselves better, and to be able to rise up, as it were, when they were going to attack an enemy, and strike a blow."

A further disadvantage of the straight-legged seat, as far as it concerned the Army, was that it demanded a higher standard of horsemanship. True balance on the fork is difficult to attain, and more often than not it was on his reins that the soldier relied for support in riding. The "firm hand and light seat" had long been a by-word in the service. Optimists will no doubt remark with Cesaresco that horses with insensible mouths have the advantage of making it possible for many people to ride who could not otherwise do so. The modern English regulation seat, which is the hunting one, should, however, put an end to the above state of affairs; and the remark of a famous master of hounds, made but a few years ago, that his son rode very well until he entered the Army and passed through a cavalry riding school, should not hold good nowadays. The old-pattern military saddle, which is only suited to the seat advocated by Xenophon, has unfortunately been retained; the big man has the greatest difficulty in getting into it, and is most uncomfortable when he gets there. Big and small are farther from the horse than need be.

A good judge and a close follower of racing for

the last thirty years or so tells me that before Tod Sloan's appearance on the English turf in 1897 the flat-racing seat had got into a ridiculous extreme, most of the jockeys riding as if they had pokers down their backs, which had by no means been the case in the days of Tom Cannon, Archer, and Fordham, the last named having indeed often been spoken of as looking like a monkey on a horse. The first exponent of the American flat-racing seat (Plate II) in England was Sims, who rode Eau Gallie in the Crawford Plate at Newmarket in 1895, but it was left to Tod Sloan two years later to reap historic successes. He was a marvelous horseman, and for a time at least had few rivals in the new art, which is eminently one either to excel in or to let alone. Good judges will tell you that there are only half a dozen jockeys on the English turf who are first-class riders in the new style, and that the remainder would do very much better to go back to the old methods, but this they are hardly likely to do, and even steeplechase jockeys are shortening their stirrups, two notable examples being Parfrement (the French jockey), and Newry, both winners of the Grand National at Liverpool.

Plate II.—The Flat-Racing Seat

According to Dodge, author of "Riders in Many Lands," the crouching seat was the old Red Indian one, but I have been told that its value for flat-racing was discovered in the following manner.

A racing man went out West to try and pick up something useful at "outside" meetings, where he found that horses were generally ridden by black men, who sat very much after the manner of monkeys at a circus, with a firm hold of the mane, and with their thighs horizontal. The visitor bought one of the successful horses, thinking that it would be a gold mine when properly ridden by a white jockey, but to his great surprise it was always beaten, until he bethought him of putting up the negro again. The return of his purchase to its proper form now gave the owner food for thought, and he was intelligent enough to hit upon the true reason for the colored man's success, which was soon emulated by most of the white riders in the country.

The advantage of the American seat, briefly, is that it allows of the rider's weight being carried in the right place for speed—*i. e.*, well over the withers, which is very much farther forward than

is possible with even the straight-legged seat. This gives the horse increased power of propulsion, and the crouching attitude adopted by the rider reduces wind-pressure to a minimum. I have been told by a well-known owner that rogues go better if ridden in this manner, which would seem to point to the fact that it is more comfortable for the horse for a short distance.

This is the bright side of the picture, but no one can say that the American seat is an easy one; the only part of the rider's body to touch the saddle is his leg from the knee downwards, and all his gripping must be done with this surface alone. Balance is rendered extremely difficult, and the same may be said of the use of the lower part of the leg. A few jockeys can spur their horses, but the majority merely punish the flaps, and it is not uncommon after a race to find spur-marks in front of the saddle. It is obvious that with no support to either the thighs or the seat, all but the very best riders must depend largely on the reins for maintaining their balance, and must lose the greater part of their control over shifty, uncertain, or awkward horses. It is much harder to use the whip when this seat

is adopted—in fact, jockeys have been known to miss their mounts altogether; as far as the horse is concerned, his forelegs would tire and eventually wear out if he habitually carried too much weight on them. It is certain that the American seat will never be adopted for all-round riding.

As Mr. Jorrocks said, the seat a man finds easiest to himself "will in all humane probability be the easiest to his 'oss."

The loosely-named hunting seat is certainly the one for all-round work; whatever power of propulsion the horse loses from having to carry the weight farther back is amply compensated for by the pain and fatigue he escapes when ridden over fences, or with his rider bumping to the trot along a hard road in the straight-legged seat.

No fixed rule can be laid down as to the correct height of a man's knee in the hunting seat; everything depends upon his make and shape. The fat-thighed man must naturally ride shorter than he who is built for the saddle, but if the stirrups are too short, balance is sacrificed; on the other hand, if the leg is too straight the inside of the knee and thigh becomes round, which makes gripping more

difficult (Hayes). It will also be found that, owing to their diversity of action, different horses require to be ridden with longer or shorter stirrups. In 1909 at the Military Tournament the Rough-Riders from the Royal Artillery Riding Establishment, using the hunting seat, sat perfectly without either reins or stirrups over a 5 ft. 5 in. rail—one horse jumping 6 ft.—besides other formidable obstacles, which proves that no better seat could be wanted for practical work.

It must be understood that all my future remarks on instruction in riding will refer to the attainment of the hunting seat alone.

III

BALANCE

III

BALANCE

"It is from the loins that he must really ride when all is said and done." WHYTE MELVILLE.

"He that would venture nothing must not get on a horse."
Spanish Proverb.

BALANCE, *i. e.*, the mechanical adjustment of the body to the movements of the horse, is the foundation of all good riding. It is the most difficult of all things to teach, and is more quickly acquired by men with pluck and nerve than by those who lack self-confidence. The secret of its attainment is suppleness of the body from the hips upwards; Pembroke righly remarks that "good riding is incompatible with stiffness." The heavily-topped man with short legs is theoretically at a disadvantage as a horseman, because his center of gravity is higher, and therefore farther from the saddle. Normally it is at about the height of an imaginary line running horizontally through the hips. Once learnt, balance is quite instinctive.

Some devotees of the straight-legged seat have written that man should ride by balance, and I have met Boers who used no girths, but this practice and the other comfortable theory would break down were jumping to be undertaken, or the riding of anything but a well-trained horse on the flat, who would be sure not to make what some writers term "reactions." Under any more strenuous conditions the rider cannot poise his body to balance it unless the knees are firm on the saddle.

For instructional purposes the principle of balance on horseback should be considered under three aspects: the first when the horse is advancing in a straight line; the second when he inclines his body inwards in the act of turning—the degree of inclination being determined by the pace at which he is traveling; and the third when the horse is jumping.

In the first case, all the rider has to be taught to do in the initial stages is to sit in an easy position with his seat well under him in the center of the saddle, and to look between the horse's ears. In this and in the third aspects the security of the rider's seat depends on the application of his weight with reference to the perpendicular; at very fast paces the

Plate III.—Circling at a Canter

man's body is of course inclined forward to counteract the forces acting against it. A different reason dictates to the rider that he should lean forward to rise at the trot. He does this to shift his center of gravity farther forward and therefore more over the fulcrum: *i. e.,* the knees, thus making the body easier to lift.

In the second case, when the horse leans inwards to turn, the rider's body must be in the same plane —that is to say, at the same angle as the horse's (Plate III). If it remains perpendicular with the ground, as when riding straight forward, the pupil will have a tendency to fall off outwards; if he leans more inwards than the horse, he will conversely fall off inwards. Therefore when turns are first practised the instructor must center his attention on persuading the pupil to incline his body with that of the horse, exactly as he would on a bicycle; centrifugal force alters the plane of the horse's body, and the rider must conform.

In teaching a man how to poise his body in order to maintain its balance when jumping, the directions given in many books should be disregarded, including the text-book (1907) of the British Army. The

child on the rocking-horse keeps his body practically perpendicular to the ground whilst the horse rocks, if he is not bearing on the reins; he appears to lean backwards and forwards, but this is an ocular deception caused by the rocking movements. When the boy learns to ride on leaving the nursery he is often told to sit well back when going at any fence but a bank, and the true balance he may have acquired as an infant is sacrificed. The position he is now taught to assume in the saddle makes holding on by the reins a necessity if he is not to tumble backwards off his pony when it rises.

The rocking-horse does not, however, move forward, and if the reader stands on an advancing platform he will find that to maintain his equilibrium he must lean more or less forward, according to the pace at which the platform is traveling.

Plates IV and V show the correct balance of the body when the horse rises and when he is in the middle of his jump, the pace being a slow canter in both cases; it will be seen that the preponderance of the rider's weight in either picture is on the forward side of a line passing through the man's hips and perpendicular with the ground. In Plate VI, as

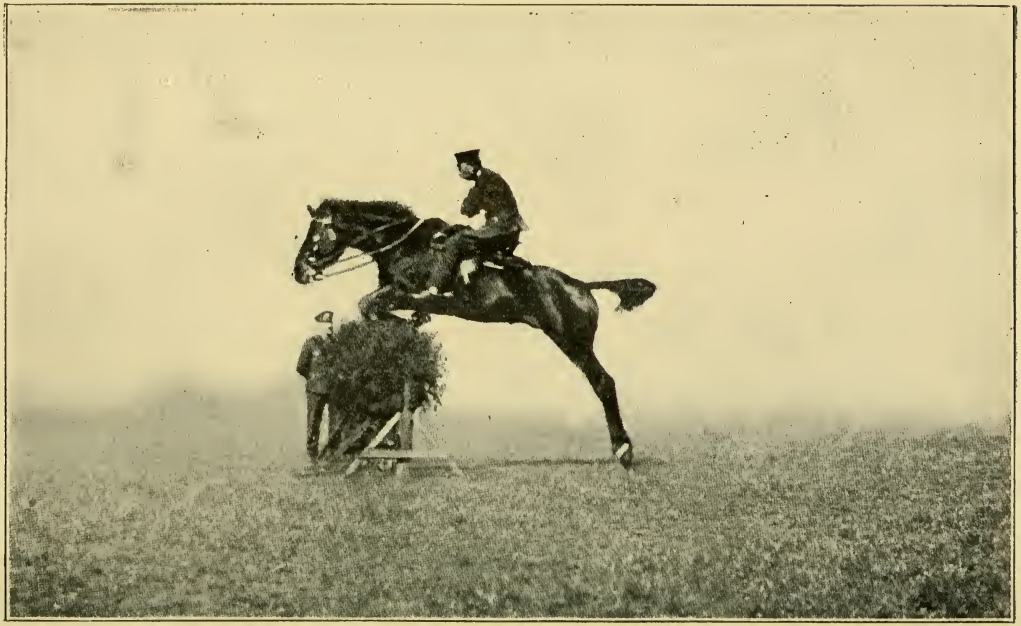

Plate IV.—Good Balance Rising. Pace, a Canter

Plate V.—Good Balance at the Top of the Jump. Pace, a Canter

Plate VI.—Good Balance at the Top of the Jump. Pace, a Gallop

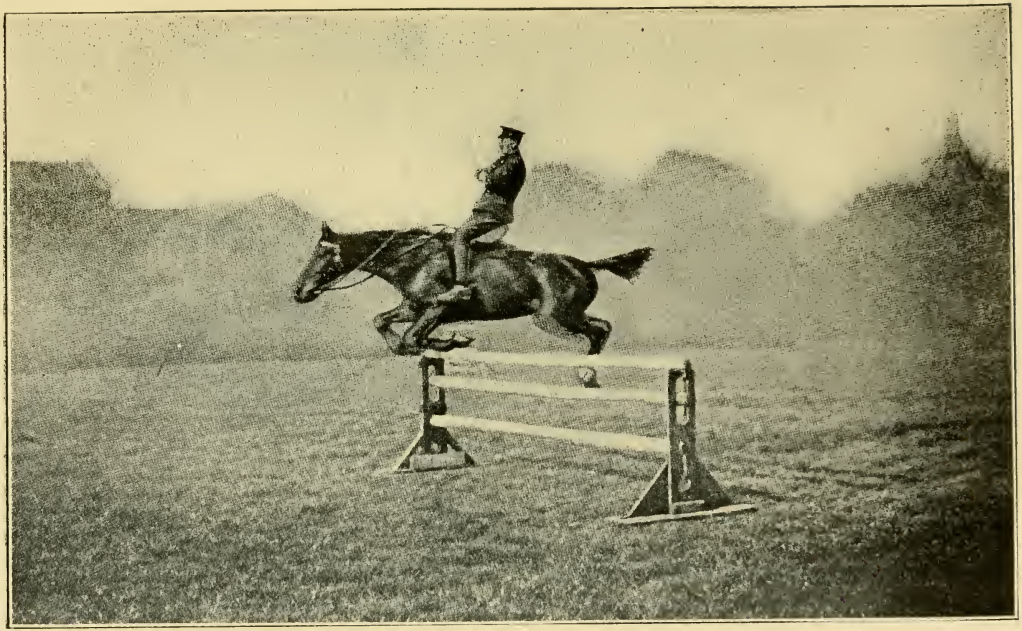

Plate VII.—Balance Lost. Pace, a Canter

the horse shown is moving much faster and as the pace must regulate the degree of inclination, the rider's body is in this case inclined more forward, in order to preserve true balance.

Plate VII illustrates the evil effect of letting the body get behind the perpendicular at either of these phases of the jump; the rider depicted in it had, to my certain knowledge, excellent gripping power, but grip alone was not enough on this occasion; the man had no reins to hold on by, and he therefore fell off backwards. I have witnessed many falls from the same cause, and the skeptic can at once prove the correctness of the statement by dropping his reins at a fence.

Let us now consider the poise of the body when the horse is in the act of descending. If the reader will stand up on the car of a switch-back in motion he will find that to maintain his equilibrium he will have to lean forward when going downhill, and the difference between this movement and that of landing over a fence is that at slow paces the horse generally dwells when he lands, whereas the switchback makes no pause at the bottom of the incline. Careful observation extending over a lengthened period,

and assisted by photographic experiments, has led me to the conclusion that in landing over a fence at a canter the rider depicted in Plate VIII has got his body as far back as possible with due regard to safety, and that this poise can only be assumed at a slow pace and on a horse which dwells on landing. If the animal is very quick away after jumping at a canter the rider is apt to be left if his body is not slightly on the forward side of the perpendicular with the ground. I must here impress upon the reader that *for the rider to get behind the perpendicular when landing over a big fence he must lean back to a considerable degree from his hips.* The Italians say that the body should be in front of the perpendicular to the *horse* on the downward plane and when landing; this is a necessary corollary to their method of riding, and they hold their reins shorter than we do in England. The objections to this practice, excepting perhaps for steeplechasing, will be referred to later on in the section on the "Use and Misuse of the Hands."

Any amateur who has ridden a gallop at a trainer's will have experienced to his discomfiture how quickly a well-schooled horse gets away on

Plate VIII.—Good Balance Landing at a Slow Pace

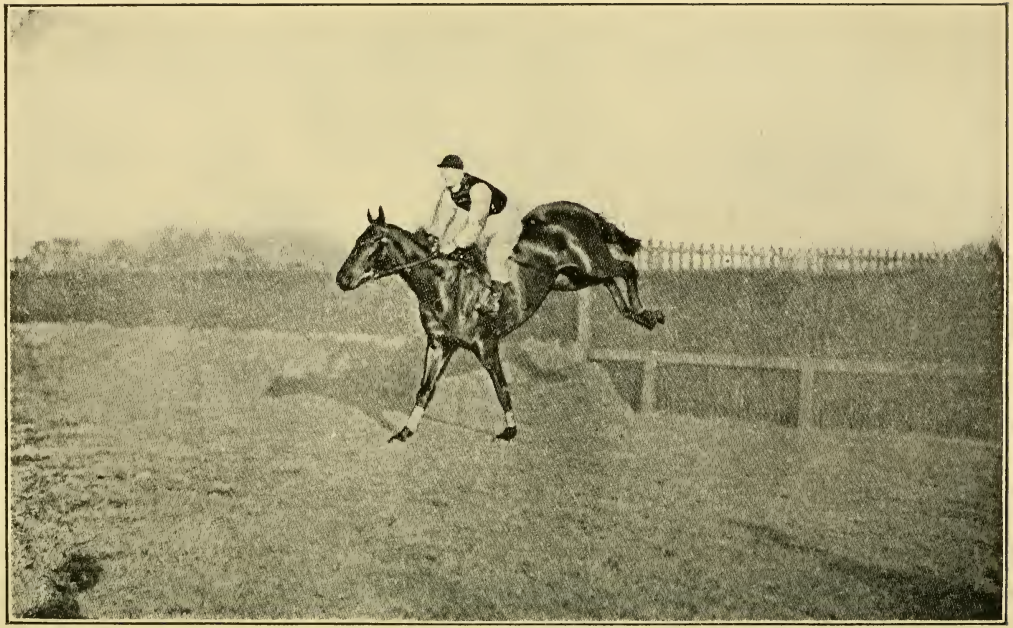

Plate IX.—Leaning Forward on Landing at Racing Pace

landing, and how the reins alone have saved him if he has been leaning back. Go to any steeplechase meeting in England and observe the poise of the jockey's bodies as the horse is on the downward plane; you will find that about sixty per cent, are sitting more or less as depicted in Plate IX, and the remaining forty per cent. are leaning back—some even behind the perpendicular. In a kindly review of this book in an English magazine, the writer asserts that the jockey in the above-mentioned plate does not bear out my argument, as he has been jerked forward by the shock of landing. I would ask the reader to study the position of the rider's arms and the length of his reins; if he had been leaning back before his horse's fore-legs touched the ground, the animal's head would have been pulled up into an impossible position.

This statement concerning steeplechase jockeys is not perhaps easy to believe, and a well-known rider who has won the National affirms that it is ridiculous, particularly over that course. I was, however, enabled to verify it by the kindness of the "Warwick Trading Company," who gave me a private exhibition on the bioscope of the best pro-

fessional and amateur jockeys negotiating every class of fence on practically every steeplechase course.

It seems to me that if we hold to the instructions of our fathers and throw the body behind the perpendicular on landing, we are acting as if a blunder and not a clean jump were the rule in steeplechasing and hunting. It may be argued that by doing so we lighten the horse's forehand and thus help to save a fall if he pecks, but on the other hand it reduces his pace and makes interference with his head and neck at a critical moment almost a certainty. This last point will be fully discussed in the "Use and Misuse of the Hands." When the horse does blunder, the body should be thrown back if possible, and the same thing applies to stumbling.

We now come to the case when leaning forward is overdone for practical riding, which is at "show jumping." It is a common thing at a horse show to see the English professional rider landing with his chest touching the horse's neck (see Plate X), and this is done to take the weight off the animal's quarters and make him less likely to strike the obstacle with his hind-legs. The practice is mechanically

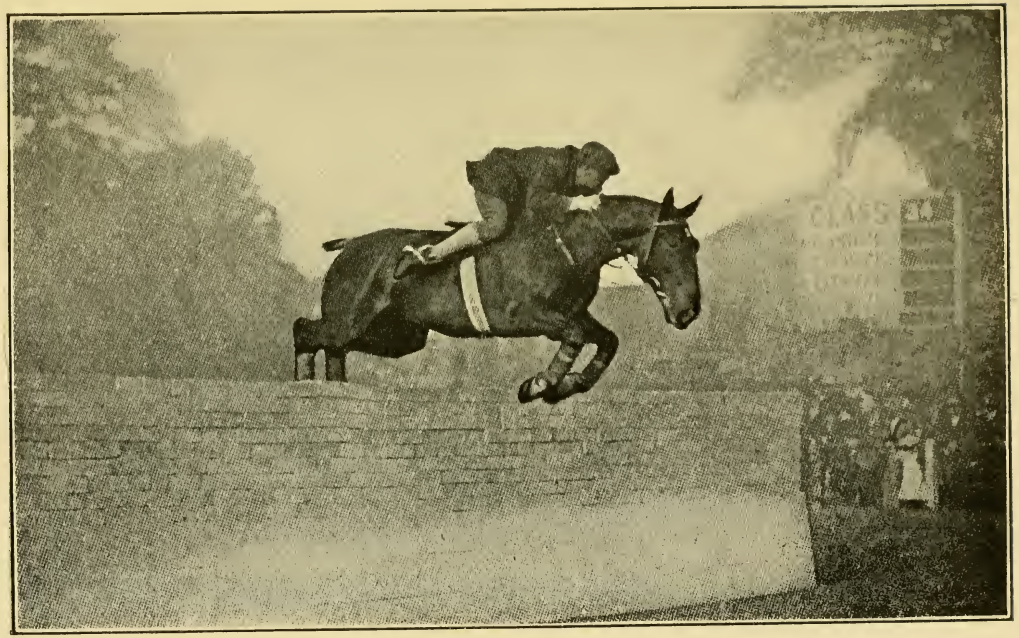

Plate X.—A Professional Show-Jumping Seat

correct as far as the horse's jumping is concerned, but the rider will in all probability fall off if the animal makes a mistake. Even if he were going at top speed, so much deviation from the perpendicular would make balance impossible; the rider can, however, maintain his seat by firm grip if all goes well, as his body is poised in the direction in which the horse's body is being propelled, and not as in Plate VII. Another disadvantage of this show jumping posture is, that increased weight comes on the forehand on landing.

Hayes, in " Points of the Horse," and in his article on riding in the " Encyclopædia of Sport," says that the body should be leant back when the horse rises at a fence in order to lighten the forehand and assist the horse in the rearing up which is his first movement in jumping; he can never have experimented without reins, or he would have found out the evils of the practice. Mechanically, with reference to the horse only, his statement is open to serious argument, as apparently he had neglected the force of propulsion, and the angle of its application. In negotiating a " drop," the force of gravity makes the angle of descent of the horse steeper, and the

rider's head will naturally come nearer to the horse's croup.

To the reader who is interested in this subject, I would suggest the experiment of placing himself near a small fence or hurdle the next time he is out hunting, and watching the field jump it. He will then see how many people retain their balance by means of the reins.

IV

KNEE AND THIGH GRIP

IV

KNEE AND THIGH GRIP

"When fastened like glue to the saddle
We gallop astern of the pack."
Tarporley Hunting Song, 1855.

THE man who has never been on a horse probably has very little development of the particular muscles used in riding; and however strong he may be naturally, he cannot have much confidence in himself when asked to apply them for the first time on an animal he most likely regards with awe. Two sets of muscles, the flexor at the groin, which keeps the knee up, and the adductor grip muscles, have to be developed before a satisfactory seat can be attained. The process by which this may be done is a branch of the art of training athletes which does not always receive the attention it deserves. Before a man learns to drive four horses it is necessary that he should strengthen the muscles of his shoulders, arms, and fingers by manipulating dummy reins with weights attached to them, if quick results are to be

obtained when he gets on to the box, and the same principle must apply to the thigh muscles of the man who is to be taught riding. The polo player not only uses the dummy pony to get his eye in, but also to strengthen his arm and wrist, and incidentally his thighs.

The fact that grip can only be obtained by muscular contraction renders its constant application impossible on the score of fatigue; its early acquirement is nevertheless most important to give the pupil confidence. If a man feels he has sufficient grip power to help him he will more quickly learn balance.

Certain exercises will develop the flexor and adductor muscles; they may be gone through either on a horse or on a dummy horse, and should be increased gradually. If possible, the pupil should be put through them once a day for about ten days before his instruction in riding commences. They should be continued during the first part of the course, and not in the hours allotted to riding. The instructor must bear in mind that it is useless to exercise a tired muscle, and he will find that the man can accomplish but little during the first few days.

Where there is a constant flow of pupils, a small number of dummy horses will well repay their initial cost. They can be made from a short piece of the trunk of a tree, having approximately the same girth as a horse, or a small barrel standing on four props. The top of the trunk or barrel should be fitted to take a saddle, and should be about four feet from the ground. The place where the knee lies may be hollowed out and stuffed with hay to give a softer grip. The wood below the level of the knee should be cut away to prevent the rider from obtaining any assistance from the lower part of the leg. Supervision is simpler if a dummy horse is used, as the instructor is more on a level with his pupil; the latter will not be preoccupied with the management of his horse, and will learn from the first to be entirely independent of his reins as far as his seat is concerned.

Dummy horses are also useful for teaching mounting and saddling, besides bridling and holding the reins if there is a head; their employment for instructional purposes is not a new idea: Vegetius wrote that wooden horses were used in early times to teach vaulting on to the horse (Berenger).

Early in 1907 three of these horses were set up in the gallery of one of the Riding Establishment's riding schools at Woolwich, and the exercises given below practised on them.

It is important that the pupil should be placed well down in the saddle before commencing.

I wish to lay stress on this point, which is often neglected by instructors. The exercises lose half their value if the pupil sits on the back of the saddle.

The following are the exercises, the first two being the most important:—

1. Rising from the knee with stirrups.

2. Rising from the knee without stirrups (at a later stage).

3. Touching the foot with the hand on each side, with and without stirrups.

4. Leaning forwards and backwards in the saddle, with and without stirrups.

5. Swinging the lower part of the leg to the rear, and towards the horse's side, so that it describes a circular motion.

In all the foregoing exercises the knee should be

kept firm on the saddle, and no assistance derived from the lower part of the leg.

6. Relaxing and tightening the knee and thigh grip.

The first four exercises make the body supple from the hips; 3 and 4, which are taken out of the British Cavalry Training Manual, make excellent balancing exercises at a trot and canter when the pupil's instruction in riding is some way advanced, and No. 5 is a modification of an exercise recommended by Baucher. I have given them a long and thorough trial, and am convinced of their great value; the beginner who has not undergone them and is allowed to ride with reins will always raise himself out of the saddle when rising at the trot by pulling on the reins, instead of by using his knee.

The reader who wishes to teach a child to ride may or may not decide to follow this procedure, having plenty of time at his disposal: I can only say that I have tried it with youths of between thirteen and fifteen years of age with the most excellent results, and that it would seem obviously safer with very young children to lessen the risk of dangerous falls, which must frequently occur where, as is

usually the case, a little boy rides entirely by balance and by the help of the reins for months and even years after his first riding lesson.

My successor at the Riding Establishment, Major the Hon. W. D. Sclater Booth, R.H.A., has improved and enlarged upon the idea of the dummy horse (Plates XI and XII), by mounting it on rockers and converting it into a full-sized child's "rocking-horse," for the purpose of teaching the elements of fore-and-aft balance, and the movements of the shoulders, elbows, and wrists in jumping. The horse's throat works on a hinge and is connected with the nose by pulleys and weights, so that when the dummy is in motion the action of the bending and stretching of a horse's neck is represented. The pulley and weights are not shown in the illustration.

This elaboration of the dummy horse permits of exercises which have more life and movement, and relieves the tyro of all fear of monotony. In addition to the exercises already given, for which the horse should be fixed, the following may be practised:—

1. An instructor rocking the horse, the pupil swings his body backwards and forwards.

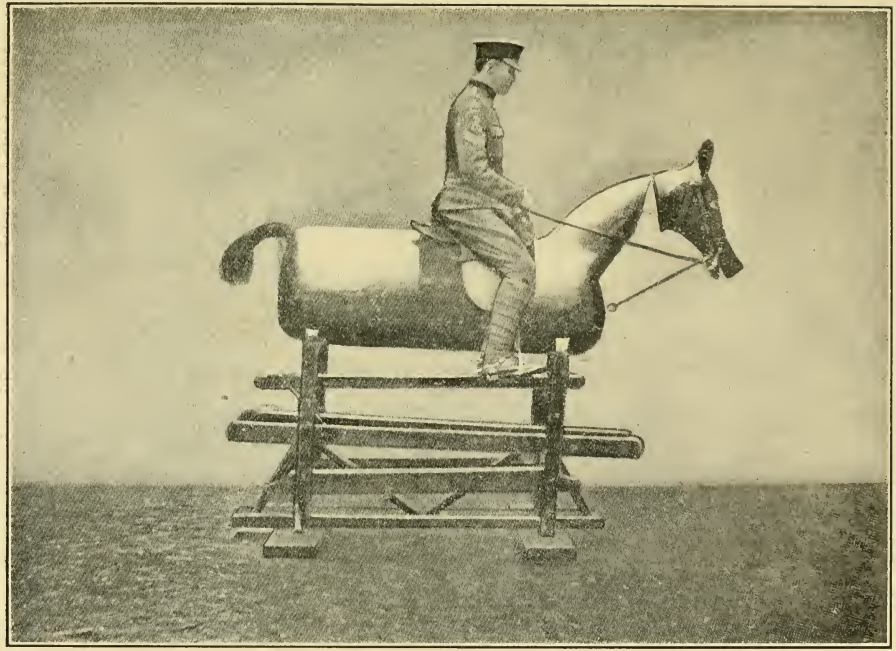

Plate XI.—The Rocking-Horse for Instructional Exercises

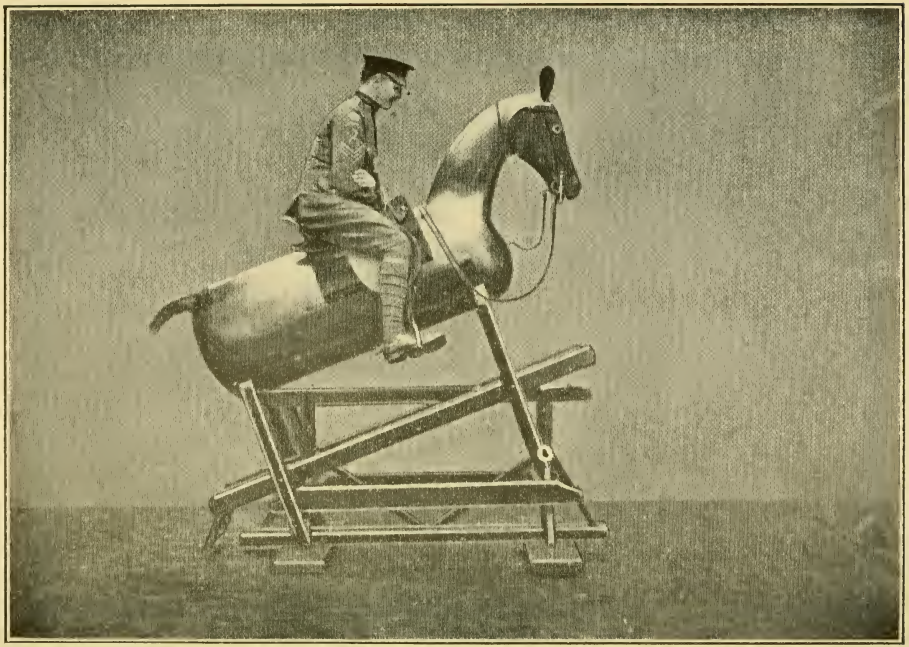

Plate XII.—The Rocking-Horse for Instructional Exercises—Another View

2. The same as No. 1, the pupil holding the reins and shooting out his arms from the shoulder as the horse descends.

3. Sitting with arms folded, and rocking the horse by swinging the upper part of the body. This exercise especially develops the thigh muscles.

It is obvious that much better results are obtained from preliminary exercises on this rocking-horse than on the fixed dummy horse.

Rider's strain is by no means uncommon, and is most painful and tiresome. Major Philip G. Ievers, Royal Army Medical Corps (retired), tells me that he has cured many cases by the use of the following contrivance.—

(Fig. 1). A pulley, which can be purchased with a screw attached to it, may be fastened to a beam or any wooden structure in the ceiling. The weight should be of seven or eight pounds to commence with, gradually increased to twelve pounds; it should be from two to three feet from the ground when the foot-loop rests on the ground, thus allowing sufficient play for the motion of the foot to be of a semi-rotatory character. The exercise should be

practised daily for from five to ten minutes at first, and later on for fifteen minutes or more. A fortnight or three weeks generally makes the muscle quite strong.

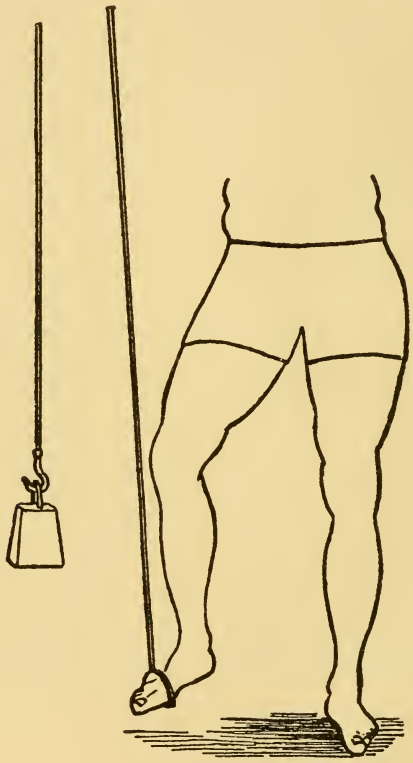

Fig. 1.

V

GETTING DOWN INTO THE SADDLE

V

GETTING DOWN INTO THE SADDLE

"As he rammed down his hat, and got home in his seat,
This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat."

WHYTE MELVILLE.

IN other words, this simply means being part and parcel with your horse; sitting *in* the saddle and not *on* it.

The pupil will take some time to attain this desirable end unless he does a certain amount of riding without stirrups during his course, and when he is using them they should not be fitted too short. There is a general tendency nowadays in this direction, and it is not, in my opinion, to be encouraged for beginners. For an exaggerated example of this we have only to go to the flat-racing stable. Here boys practically commence riding with their thighs horizontal, with the result that we have such good judges as Messrs. Richard Marsh, Tom Cannon Senior, and S. Darling deploring the deterioration

of the flat-race jockeys of to-day. As previously mentioned, the balance of the body with short stirrups is difficult even for the finished horseman; how much more so for the beginner. The heavier lads in an English racing stable who are selected to "make" the yearlings use stirrups of the usual length, and they are the conspicuously better horsemen for ordinary riding.

Baucher was a believer in the following exercise for getting the pupil well split up: "He will remove one of his thighs as far as possible from the quarters of the saddle, and afterwards replace it with a rotatory movement from without inwards, in order to make it adhere to the saddle by as many points of contact as possible."

To cure round thighs, another experienced teacher, who was for some time responsible for equitation in our Army, claimed that good results came from putting the hand under the fleshy part of the thigh when in the saddle, and pulling it outwards. I do not consider that in either case the results would justify the expenditure of time and trouble. If the instructor has placed the pupil well into his saddle on the dummy horse, his labors in this

respect will be lightened when riding proper commences.

The round, fat-thighed man is physically prevented from getting well down into the saddle, and is therefore not so favorably placed for retaining his seat as his longer-legged and more flat-thighed brother.

VI

THE ONE AID AND THE INDICATIONS

VI

THE ONE AID AND THE INDICATIONS

"Any fool can learn to ride a horse, but it takes an accomplished man to be a horseman." *Old French Saying.*

"Man and horse should be one perfect whole; . . . when it is not, there is no meaning between man and horse, they talk different languages and all is confusion." BERENGER.

WHEN the pupil has acquired a firm and well-balanced seat, the instructor's next aim must be to teach the use to which the movement of the body from the hips upwards can be put for altering the distribution of the weight; as also the use of the hand, the lower part of the leg, the voice, the whip, and the spur, experts having very different opinions on all these points. They are referred to in nearly all books as the "aids," and to the average Englishman who has not been through a military riding school the word is shrouded in mystery, and usually associated with Haute Ecole work; yet every time he rides he makes use of one aid and several indications to make his horse do what he wants.

Generally speaking, the word "aids" is a misnomer; there is only one *bona-fide* aid—the movement of the body from the hips upwards. Of the others, Greenwood writes: "Common sense tells us that a horse receives no aid from a pull in the mouth with a piece of iron, or a blow from a whip or kick in the side from an armed heel." The hands can regulate a horse's pace to keep him from floundering in a plough; the legs can indicate to him what we wish him to do with his hind-quarters, and can put him into his bridle, but they are no mechanical aid to his movements. The voice may encourage him, but, again, it cannot aid.

I have before me as I write the so-called "aids" recommended in the English, French, German, Italian, and Austo-Hungarian cavalry drill-books, to make a horse strike off at a canter with whichever leg the rider desires. They do not all agree, and in matters of detail are often diametrically different, whilst many of the directions given are very involved. The "aids" in the British military text-book have been changed more than once.

A combined use of the aid and the indications, of the simplest possible character, and violating no

principle of elementary mechanics, will be given later in the section devoted to instructional exercises, and I will there deal with each one separately, but must insist on the sound principle that their use can only be properly taught when the pupil has acquired a firm seat, although he should be shown from the first how to start his horse at a walk, etc., and how to turn him—this much he can accomplish.

When the pupil is receiving instruction in the use of the aid and the indications, he should be mounted on a horse that will obey them properly when applied. It is not an uncommon practice to mount the beginner on a horse with an iron mouth, and a flank with about as much feeling in it as a brick wall—or perhaps it would be more correct to say, a flank that is totally unresponsive to the rider's signals; the instructor is then very much annoyed when neither horse nor man will do what is required of him.

VII

DISTRIBUTION OF THE RIDER'S WEIGHT

VII

DISTRIBUTION OF THE RIDER'S WEIGHT

"The Tartars have in all ages been famous under different names for their love of horses, and skill in riding. It is a practice with them, says an author, . . . to tye the reins of their bridles to their girdles, and by the motions of their bodies alone to govern and direct their horses; putting them into different attitudes, and making them perform a variety of evolutions." BERENGER.

THE rider can help, hinder, or assume a neutral attitude towards the movements of his horse, by poising the upper part of the body so as to bring more weight to bear on a particular leg or legs, or by taking the weight of it off them. This is an aid which is not very generally understood, and is extremely valuable, as it is not dependent on the sensitiveness of the horse's mouth or sides.

When there is no weight on the horse's back he can be taught to move in any particular way through the medium of signs given by the reins, or by the whip and voice. It does not at all follow that the same indications will make different horses do the

same things; for instance, a horse can be taught to come to the whip, that is to say, to come to you when struck, or to fly from you at the same signal; to go faster as the pressure of the reins gets stronger, like an American trotter, or to pull up under similar treatment; the whole thing is a matter of training.

Put a man on a horse's back and he can teach the animal to do various things when certain indications of the hands and legs are applied, but he can make it physically difficult for the horse to obey him by a false distribution of the weight of his own body. Lean over and towards a horse's fore-leg when he is standing still, and he will not move it comfortably; you have so weighted it as to make it easier for him to get the other off the ground. The simplest practical demonstration of the soundness of this principle is to place yourself on all fours on the ground, let somebody get on to your back and lean towards your right hand, and then try to move it. Or with no one on your back you can make up your mind to move one particular hand, and you will find that before doing so you must lighten it by shifting the weight of the upper part of your body on to the other arm.

In the light of the above paragraph it is easy to understand how the horse is helped in turning if the rider poises his body so as to weight the leg the horse uses as a pivot. For example, in turning on the quarters to the right, the body should be leant back and to the right. Conversely, it helps the horse if we lighten the leg he wishes to strike off with at a canter. The French, Austrians, and Italians do so in the following manner: for commencing the canter on a straight line with, say, the off fore-leg leading, the man rests his weight on his left buttock, at the same time leaning slightly back, thus making it easier for the horse to move the desired leg.

When cantering on a small circle the horse naturally moves with his inward leg leading, either with or without a man on his back. If he is being longed with a single rein and cavesson and is going unwillingly—that is to say with a pull on the rein—his head will be brought in and his outward shoulder will be forward; this may make him lead with the outward leg, but it cannot be taken as a test, as his hind-legs will be working on a larger circumference than his fore-legs: in fact, the horse is not moving on a true circle at all.

The theory has often been advanced that the horse leads with his inward leg to support the weight of the rider as he inclines his body towards the center of the circle in obedience to centrifugal force, but as the animal does just the same thing when riderless we must look for another explanation. This seems to me to lie in the fact that it is mechanically easier for the horse, because the inward leg is moving on a smaller circle than the outer one; it would be very awkward for the animal to lead with the latter, and would also expose him to the danger of crossing his fore-legs and falling.

Centrifugal force is accountable for the fact that the rider's weight is about evenly distributed though he and the horse lean inwards. A vehicle always upsets outwards when driven too fast round a corner, which shows that the weight is on the outer wheels: the carriage cannot lean inwards like a living body to adjust the distribution of the weight.

Centrifugal force is also responsible for the swing of the body not being a "false" aid when teaching the young horse to change his legs in a figure-of-eight; on a trained horse it should, when necessary, make him do so at once.

The correct attitude of the body when jumping, and the evil results of leaning either too far back or unduly far forward have already been dealt with under the heading of Balance.

VIII

THE USE AND MISUSE OF THE HANDS

VIII

THE USE AND MISUSE OF THE HANDS

"The *Writers* of Books, and the *Horse-Men* now living, that think themselves Wise, and great masters, by the diversity of *Bitts*, shew themselves full of Ignorance, and Simple People, to imagine, That a piece of *Iron* in a Horse's *Mouth* can bring him *Knowledge*; no more than a *Book* in a *Boyes* Hand can, at first, make him *Read*."

NEWCASTLE.

"The hand, which by giving and taking properly, gains its point with the least force, is the best." PEMBROKE.

THE man who can control his horse in all manner of situations and over all classes of country with the minimum of discomfort to the aminal and therefore to himself may be said to have good hands. There are men of exceptional disposition who have that inborn influence over horses which it is impossible to explain, and they will always stand out in a class of their own as regards hands; but I can see no reason why most other riders should have bad ones, providing they have a firm seat independent of the reins and know how to use them, and ride properly balanced horses.

The importance of horse-balance will be dealt with fully in the section on horse-training, but some mention of it is necessary here, as the rider of an ill-balanced horse must perforce use his hands very much more than would otherwise be the case, and thus run the chance of upsetting the animal by disturbing his mouth. The power of the hand is also to a great extent regulated by the balance of the horse. Adams puts this very graphically, and suggests the experiment of standing in an upright position and letting some one place a tape round your forehead and hold the ends. If he pulls you can offer no resistance: you are similarly placed to a well-balanced horse. Now lower your head, bend your body, and place one foot out behind, and in this position you will be able to resist the man with the tape.

More pain can be given to a horse by the bridle than by the whip or the spurs. The mucous membrane lining the mouth is naturally more sensitive than the outer hide, and the bones of the head are more thinly covered with flesh. A tired horse in a cart will move into a trot if jobbed severely in the mouth, long after the whip has failed to stimulate

him. It is well, therefore, thoroughly to understand the mechanical laws which apply to the movements of the animal's head and neck in order to avoid giving him unnecessary pain by misuse of the hand. There is no doubt that these parts of his anatomy help him to preserve his equilibrium. Watch a horse careering about a field at liberty. Before he sets off at either a trot or a canter he throws up his head and neck to raise his forehand and free his forelegs. When he wishes to stop he lowers his head [1] and neck, and at full gallop he always carries them out. When making sudden turns and starts he uses his head in a variety of ways to get his balance in the right place.

Most students of Haute Ecole would have us more or less rob a horse of this free movement, and teach him to perform the various evolutions required of him without altering the position of his head and neck. But while admitting that he should not be allowed to what might be called "sprawl," I find it difficult to see eye to eye with these gentlemen. I admit that freedom is not essential in the riding-school, where the ground is soft and even and the pace cannot be great; but in the open, where we have

[1] When properly trained and mounted he pulls up on his hocks, and keeps his head up to get the weight back.

to deal with rough ground, fences, and partial exhaustion, it seems wrong to deprive the horse of the use of his balancing-pole. Freedom is absolutely necessary for a supreme effort of any sort: give a prize at a horse show for a wide jump and the horse that has never been allowed to use his neck will be useless. We have recently had illustrations of this at the Horse Shows at Buenos Ayres 1908 and San Sebastian (Spain) 1909, where the horses that won the wide jump had not been taught to carry their heads in and their necks more or less permanently arched, but had on the contrary always been given full liberty of head in their work after once being trained.

I happened to know two of the winning horses at the above shows well; one was trained at the Riding Establishment at Woolwich during my term of office, and the other belonged to an officer who was for some time in the same battery with me. The former, "Biddy," winner of the 1st prize at San Sebastian and of the 2nd at New York (1909) for the long jump, is depicted in Plate VI.

Speaking generally, bad hands interfere with the free movement of the head and neck when once

the horse is trained. In support of this contention Marchese Orario Pucci, writing on the training of Italian Cavalry Officers, says:—"Little by little the conviction has been arrived at that the horse should be as free as possible and that the rider should only suggest what he is to do, and help him to do it in the way that is most natural to him."

The law of self-preservation dictates to the man that he should tighten his reins when the horse stumbles, and some writers advocate it. It may be found useful to give a horse a job in the mouth as a severe punishment for carelessness, but from a mechanical point of view it is wrong; the reins should be allowed to slip through the fingers, and the body should be leant back.

This may seem to be a contradiction of my statements on page 93, but when examined, I trust I can prove that it is not so. The two cases involve entirely different problems. In the first case, the horse is balanced and moving along; but *before* he increases his pace he lifts his head and neck, because it is easier to strike off at a trot or canter after he has done so. In the second case, he cannot raise his head high because he has lost his balance, and

his only means of recovering it is to momentarily take the weight off his shoulders by dropping his head very low, thus affording a practical example of an important principle in mechanics. This science also tells us that action and reaction are equal in opposite directions, so that the power employed to raise the head through the reins will react through the seat and sink the horse's knees. Greenwood puts this well, and Whyte Melville says that "interference with a horse's head often converts a severe blunder into a fall.[1]"

Before quitting the subject of mechanics it will be relevant to discuss a not altogether exploded fallacy —namely, that the rider can assist the horse at a fence by "lifting" him. If he forces the animal to throw up his head and neck he not only prevents him from seeing where to take off at the fence, but also disturbs a poise of the forequarters which is purposely assumed by the horse to facilitate the making of his best effort. We can but steady him, we cannot lift him—it is an obvious impossibility. He must do the lifting for both of us, so that the less

[1] The Italians claim to have proved the truth of this by instantaneous photography.

we interfere with him the better in jumping; nor should we do so in going over rough ground. Should the reader have ever, like me, had the delightful experience of galloping after a mob of horses in Australia, over ground like a rabbit-warren, and come through it in perfect safety, he will know how well a horse can look after himself under the circumstances. Very little guidance is necessary, picking your ground is impossible, and the Australian takes care to warn you about non-interference with the animal's head. I am told that the ranchmen of Western U. S. A. and the Argentine when galloping believe in the maxim "the rougher the ground the slacker the rein."

Unless the rider has shoulder-joints, elbows, and wrists which can move in unison like well-oiled machinery, and unless he can preserve an even and gentle pressure on the horse's mouth when necessary, he cannot have good hands. The upper arms should hang easily down from the shoulders: this not only gives more power to the rider than if the elbows were raised and to the front, but allows of more head-room being given to the horse if he needs it, as it enables the rider to "open his

(a good example of this is seen in Plate XIII), shoulders" and shoot out his arms to their full extent, which is indispensable when landing over a fence, unless the rider leans very much forward. The wrists should be rounded and the knuckles turned towards the horse's head to ensure the maximum of play, and the reins should be held as long as possible without sacrificing control: on these points the instructor must focus his attention. If the pupil has it in him, the rest will come by practice in riding all sorts and conditions of horses, provided they are bitted to suit their work and temperament.

One of the best judges of riding in England recently told me that he always knew a horseman by the length of his reins, and doubtless the novice, from nervousness among other causes, is apt to hold them too short; if the habit of riding with short reins is once learnt it is not easy to eradicate, and the instructor should bear this in mind. The Italians perhaps ride with the shortest reins in Europe. It is in my opinion wrong, as it stultifies the movement of the body from the hips upwards, thus

Plate XIII.—Opening the Shoulders

making the distribution of the rider's weight more difficult.

Many writers would have us never to cease from maintaining the gentlest feeling on the horse's mouth, but this does not hold good for all-round work. For polo, as the Messrs. Miller rightly observe, the pony must gallop with no pressure on the reins. Slight pressure at the beginning of a chucker generally means marked pressure at the end of it. During a gallop to hounds the firmness of hold must be regulated by the weight of the rider and the nature of the ground; it should never be constant, the horse may lose his good mouth and his true balance if we teach him to "hang." In racing and in steeplechasing parlance the horse is "driven into his bridle," and a certain leaning is necessary, but when man and horse are going at their ease there should be no pressure at all.

Phillipps's maxim on hands is worthy of note. He says that the hand of the horseman should resemble the temper of a commander—pleasant while obeyed, formidable if disobeyed.

Raise the hands and you raise the horse's head, lower them and he should lower his. A great deal

has been said and written about always keeping the hands low, but there can be no fixed rule on the subject; everything depends not only on the horse and the defences his conformation and idiosyncrasies lead him most readily to employ, but also on the pace at which he is traveling. Jim Mason always rode with his hands high, and yet according to Whyte Melville he had fewer falls than most people. This may possibly be accounted for by the fact that some men undoubtedly do not get full value out of their hands unless they ride with them at a particular height on every horse, either from ineradicable early habit, or from some peculiarity which prevents their exerting their full strength and gentleness in any other position. These men are less likely to excel than those who can adapt themselves readily to any horse's requirements.

Ladies perforce ride with their hands higher than men, and no one can accuse them of having bad hands as a sex.

I do not consider it altogether fair to quote the well-worn saying: "If you do not pull at him he will not pull at you" to the unfortunate man whose horse is going a great deal faster than he likes.

Were he to comply with your advice, he would probably be run away with on the spot. If his bad hands have upset the animal and made him pull, there is no remedy; the man does not possess the power of "playing" the horse delicately until he submits, and if the fault lies with the horse's mouth —or rather with the riders who have spoilt it—a sudden slackening of the reins will be rather an indication that he is to go faster, than the reverse. For the moment the man must "do the best he can" by main strength, though he will be well advised to get a better trained or more temperate horse for his future riding. That "do not pull at him and he will not pull at you" has before now driven a rider in difficulties to exclaim, and with much reason: "If only he had not pulled at me, I should never have pulled at him." The man with ordinary hands and knowledge will take a pull, and a good hard one, but he will be careful to do so for a short time only—perhaps but for a few strides—and will relax the pressure the instant the animal gives to his hand, were it only a little, and will repeat this over and over again, gradually replacing force with gentleness, until an understanding has been arrived at.

Cesaresco says that under certain circumstances the strength the horse can employ against the pull of the hands is twenty times greater than the force the man can exert; whether this be true or not it is safe to say that if the horse intends to run away he can do so, in spite of any bit, and the more severe this may be, the more likely is trouble to ensue. Head tells us of a runaway horse having stopped gradually of his own accord, in consequence of the rupture of the curb-chain, which, having infuriated him by the agony it had inflicted, had actually caused the very danger it had been created to avert. This story goes to corroborate the Duke of Newcastle, who says: "... for, certainly sharp Cavezones, and cruel Bits hard Curb'd, made horses run away heretofore, making them desperate."

It should not be necessary to have both hands on the reins for ordinary riding if the horse is going pleasantly and is well trained, but riding with what in military parlance is called the "right hand free" is needful whenever it is required for holding a weapon, rope, or polo stick, and before jumping became general at home and abroad it was the accepted custom in peace and war, excepting perhaps

for racing. The cowboy and the polo player, who are obliged to follow this practice, rely to a great extent when turning on shifting the balance of the body, and on the knowledge which their animals possess of the game that is going forward. It is not easy for the polo player to apply pressure to a horse's mouth on the side to which he intends to turn, if the desired movement is more than can be communicated by turning the wrist. The indication applied is generally a pressure of the rein on the opposite side of the neck. This means pressure on the wrong side of the mouth as well, and is apt, if too sharply applied, to bend the animal's head away from the direction he is to take—an unsound situation, but difficult of remedy. I have been told that in some parts of America cowpunchers frequently ride young horses with the reins crossed behind the bit, so that when they are pressed against the neck the pull comes on the correct side of the mouth. This of course means that if the horse is ever to be ridden with two hands, he must be trained again.

There is not sufficient justification for the stress some writers lay on the manner in which the reins should be held in the hand. Go out hunting, and

you will see half a dozen riders holding their reins in half a dozen different ways; most of them being self-taught, they will pick them up without thinking why they do so in any particular manner, but some ways certainly have advantages over others. In the British Army there must be one method for the sake of uniformity, and this method has changed twice in the last eight years. As held at present, in one hand, the reins pass upwards through the hand and form a cascade of leather between the fore-finger and thumb: when held in two hands the thumb holds the reins in position.

The road coachman has to have the strongest possible hold on the reins for obvious reasons, and how does he do it? He grasps the edge of the reins, and his main hold is with the third and little fingers, in which practice can develop the maximum gripping power, because owing to their having shorter joints than the other fingers there is no room for the reins to get turned on the flat, and the thumb is left free. Many steeplechase jockeys cross their reins, and claim that it saves them from a fall if the horse pecks, as the portion of the reins between their hands meets the withers and prevents their shooting forward.

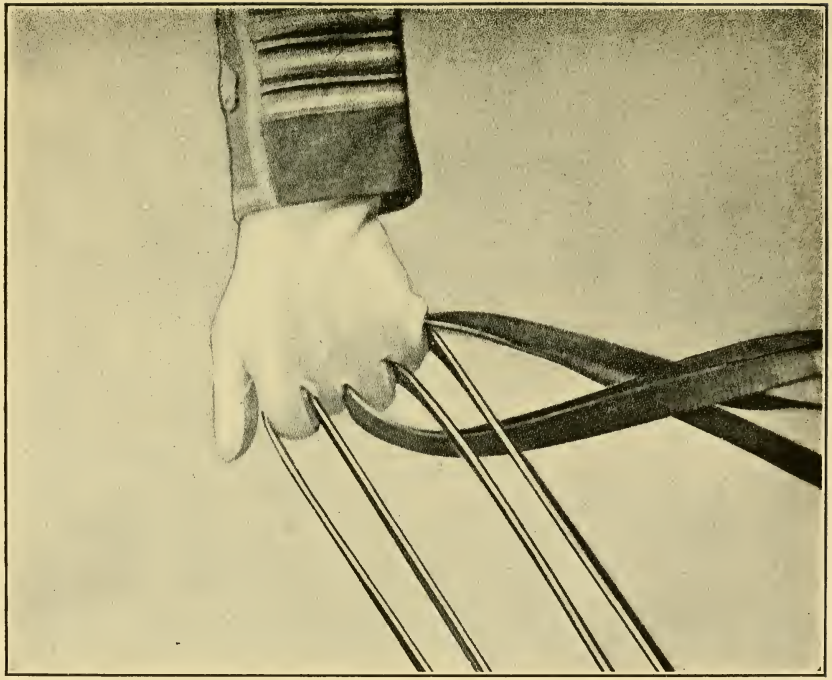

Plate XIV.—Method of Holding the Reins—In one Hand

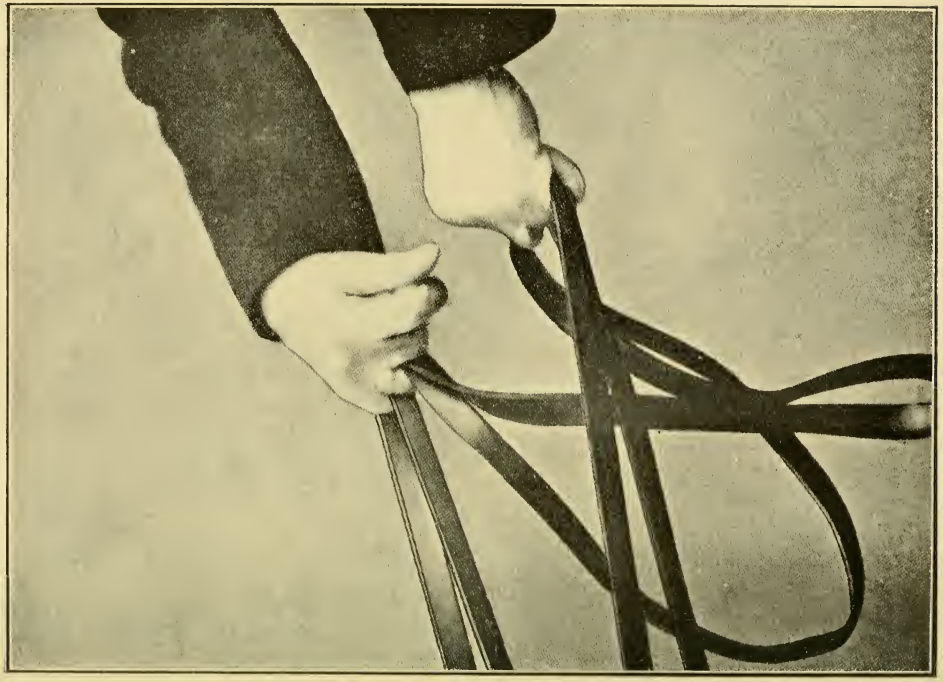

Plate XV.—Method of Holding the Reins—with Both Hands

A method of holding the reins shown me by Mr. R. Donaldson-Hudson is a good one. I recommend it for beginners, and will here give a description of it (Plates XIV and XV).

In one hand (the left).—Place the little finger of the left hand between the two left reins, the snaffle rein being uppermost and outermost. Turn the buckle end of these two reins towards the horse's head between the second and third fingers. Place the forefinger of the left hand between the two right reins, the snaffle being again uppermost and outermost.

The buckle end of these reins will naturally pass through the palm of the hand and join the other reins just above the left thigh.

For the right hand, as above, substituting "right" for "left," and *vice versa*.

To divide the reins, holding two in each hand.—Place the little finger of the unoccupied hand between the reins, which are divided by the forefinger of the occupied hand, and separate the hands as far as required; the "bight," or buckle ends of the reins, passing, in either hand, towards the horse's head between the second and third

fingers, and thus hanging over to one side or the other of the withers.

Whether held in one or both hands, the reins are always on edge—as in coaching—between the palm of the hand and the second and third fingers. When held in one hand only there is the further advantage that although all four reins are held by two fingers, the pull on either pair is in opposite directions through the hand. Lastly, it leaves the hand free to grasp anything placed between it and the forefinger without relaxing the grasp on the reins.

IX

THE USE OF THE LOWER PART OF THE LEG

IX

THE USE OF THE LOWER PART OF THE LEG

"Nothing is more detrimental to a man's seat, or more destructive of the sensibility of an horse's sides, than a continual wriggling unsettledness in an horseman's legs. . . ." PEMBROKE.

IT is in the use of this indication that the exponent of Haute Ecole and the ordinary rider come to the parting of the ways. The former constantly employs the lower part of his legs, whereas the latter on a properly trained and balanced horse only resorts to them occasionally. The horse trainer, on the contrary, comes more into line with the Haute Ecole rider; to him the correct and frequent use of the leg is everything. We often hear the remark that a horse is a perfect ride and suitable for a lady; what does this mean? Simply that the animal is well trained and balanced, temperate yet willing, and therefore does not require a pair of legs to keep him in his bridle and control his quarters when he turns.

The leg should be used with the same understand-

ing as the hand, and the well-trained horse's side should be as sensitive to its application as is his mouth to the bridle. He should answer to the touch and firm pressure of the leg as he should to the touch and firm pressure of the reins. Practice in the first five exercises already enumerated for developing the gripping muscles teaches the pupil from the commencement that the knee should be immovable in riding, and that the lower part of the leg must be used, generally speaking, as an indication. I qualify this latter statement, as when a horse jumps or bucks the rider holds on to a certain extent with the flat of the lower part of the leg as well as with the knee and thigh, according to the length of the limb. The small, fat-thighed man must perforce use this hold a good deal. When circumstances, adverse or otherwise, dictate that additional hold in this way is necessary, the pressure should be applied without shifting the lower part of the leg to the rear.

The indications of the leg are briefly as follows: A pressure of both legs to make the horse move forward, the amount of pressure being regulated by the pace desired. One leg drawn back in con-

junction with the other indications either to make a horse move his quarters in a requisite direction or prevent them from flying out; to make him bend, or passage sideways. The pressure of the leg also assists in making the horse strike off on the desired leg at a canter, or change the leading leg at the same pace. The collecting and the correct circling of the untrained horse can also only be ensured by the proper use of the leg.

Undoubtedly a horse can be made to take off when going at a fence by the combined use of the hand and leg; a blindfolded horse at the Netheravon Cavalry School was recently taught to jump by the pressure of the legs, and "Thormanby" tells us that a Dr. Minster, of Cheltenham, had a stone-blind horse who used to jump stiles on the way to the doctor's patients; but once the horse is properly trained the less he is interfered with the better when jumping. If he requires rousing it should be done at some distance from the obstacle. Fillis would have us support the horse in the air, but he cannot have been a student of mechanics, or he would have recognized the impossibility of this without at the same time solving the problem of flight.

The self-taught rider very generally straightens his leg and lets the lower part go right out to the front when landing over a fence; as already mentioned in the section on seats, the most important reason why this should not be done is that straightening the leg causes the gripping muscles to become round instead of flat; another disadvantage is that it makes the rider liable to spur the horse on the shoulder as he lands. A third and most cogent argument against the practice, from the rider's point of view, is that (unless his leathers are very long) if he happens to arrive over the fence with his whole weight on the stirrups, the shock of landing will be transmitted from his feet to his body, and he will be liable to fall off.

The question of stumbling has been dealt with already, and the evil effects of interference with the horse's mouth explained, but I can see no reason why a sharp application of the legs can do anything but good to a tripper. Mr. Charles Thompson gives this as the only course to pursue. He was the author of a treatise entitled "Rules for Bad Horsemen" (1775), and naïvely complained, in the "Advertisement of the Fourth Edition," that the title had spoiled the sale of the work.

X

THE VOICE AND THE WHIP

X

THE VOICE AND THE WHIP

"The voice is Used three Manner of Ways: Either as a *Correction*, by *Threatening*, or as a *Help* to *Incourage* the Horse; or as a *Courtship* to him by *Flattering* of him." NEWCASTLE.

"Formed with rod alone
its aids they know
And stop, and turn, obedient to the blow."
From BERENGER.

THE earliest riders, who made use of little or no gear, found the voice and whip indispensable in guiding their steeds. According to Berenger, the Carthaginians chiefly used the whip for this purpose, giving a blow on the near side of the head to make a horse turn to the right and *vice versa*, and one "full upon the gristle of the nose" when he was required to stop. Other nations, as before stated, directed their horses by the voice, a much more humane method; and it is a pity, not only from the point of view of the progressive development of the horse's mind, but also from that of its being a valuable indication from the rider, that the

perfecting of bridles and of every form of adjunct to riding threw the voice into disuse as far as Europe was concerned. Like the movement of the man's body, the voice is an indication independent of the sensitiveness of the horse's mouth and sides, and the animal who is trained to come to you, to stop, etc., by word of mouth is generally more useful than his uneducated brother. How far he can be made to understand the voice is dealt with in the section on the horse's mind.

It was "correct" in the seventeenth century for Haute Ecole riders to carry a whip in the full of the right hand, point uppermost; in this position it was always ready for immediate use, and doubtless helped to keep the horse up to the cruel bit of the day. A whip should be quite unnecessary on a trained animal unless he is by nature a slug; but the beginner on a quiet mount should generally carry a whip or stick of sorts, not so much for use as to save him the hard labor of trying to increase the horse's pace, to which the mere sight of it will often contribute.

If the animal is inclined to "run out" on a particular side, showing him the whip on that side will

often make him jump straight. To punish a horse is by no means easy, and will often betray the amateur; the whip must be held as the Haute Ecole riders of the eighteenth century held it—in the full of the hand and point uppermost—and the rider must avoid moving in the saddle when he strikes. As in the ordinary way it is carried point downwards, both the rider's hands should be well practised in getting it up from that position, which is done by a manipulation of the fingers.

The riding whip, or preferably a thick smooth cane, is very useful in educating a horse, for teaching him to bend, turn and change at a canter, and stand still in a collected manner. The subject will be referred to again in the sections on horse-training.

The cane is better than a cutting-whip, as it is shorter, hits a horse in the right place—the side—and does not alarm him by making a swishing noise in the air.

XI

SPURS

XI

SPURS

"I was up in half a minute, but he never seemed to stir,
Though I scored him with my rowels in the fall."

WHYTE MELVILLE.

BUXTORFF, in describing the horsemen of ancient Egypt, says that the word "Parash," or rider, is derived from the Hebrew root to prick or spur (Head); and Xenophon in his treatise makes mention of spurs, but no frieze or statue of about that period shows any rider wearing them. A drawing of a spur used in the fifth century, which is given in Berenger's book, depicts a milder instrument than those in use at the time of the Conquest, which were at that period, and for some time afterwards, most murderous-looking implements. They were of three kinds: one of them, the "pryck," having only a single long point, another several points of considerable size, and a third three necks. Happily, nowadays the use and not the abuse of spurs is more generally

understood. At polo rowels are not allowed, and, speaking generally, at most sports and games that horses love, the rider is better without them. For the slug and for the horse that wants his mind made up for him, sharp spurs are necessary, but they entail this disadvantage—that when hunting the rider is apt to punish his mount unintentionally, either in falling or by getting his foot caught in a fence.

Devotees of Haute Ecole seem all, or nearly all, to have been very fond of the spur, and doubtless for riding of this character it is useful. Baucher, who is recorded never to have ridden outside a school, wrote that whether a horse was a slug or hot tempered, he was three parts broken if he had been taught to endure the spurs. Fillis said that they were a "valuable aid," and Nolan and Anderson were two English writers who laid down that the young horse should be taught to receive the attack of the spur with calmness! Three at least of these authors were masters of the "great saddle," and their opinion excites every respect. Whyte Melville, a writer of a different school, would have most of us do without spurs, and he is right as long as we ride nothing but well-balanced and willing horses.

As far as training is concerned, when the heel fails try the spur without rowels, then the blunt one, and finally the sharp spur; the common-bred slug requires the blunt one very soon. By following this procedure the horse gets to learn what is required of him when he feels the rowel, otherwise he does not, and he may stand still and cow-kick as if bitten by a fly when the spur is applied.

XII

RIDING SCHOOLS v. THE OPEN

XII

RIDING SCHOOLS v. THE OPEN

"Both are good at proper seasons, and either will do very well if the Riding-Master is good." PEMBROKE.

HAVING briefly discussed what is to be taught, we may now consider how best to teach it. Shall the instruction be commenced in a riding school if one is available, or shall it be in the open? Shall the pupil be given a saddle with stirrups, or a numnah without them? Shall he begin his lessons without reins? In answering these questions we must remember to aim, above all things, at establishing confidence in the beginner as quickly as possible.

Outside the Army, riding schools in England are few and far between, but an open-air manège can soon be made, and if it be only an oblong marked out with flags or stones, horses soon learn to follow the track. The school offers great advantages in the early stages; the pupil can at once be treated as what he is—a mere passenger—and the fact that he is

within four walls gives him confidence, whilst the horse in his turn is quieter and more amenable to discipline. In a minor degree the same advantages attach to the open manège. The riding school is also better suited for lessons in jumping without reins, because, firstly, the tan is softer landing for the horse, and therefore more comfortable for the man, whether he remains in the saddle or falls off; and secondly, the animal is under better control in the school if he happens to be of a very excitable temperament. Otherwise the performance can be carried out in any field: I have experimented with all kinds of horses in the open, and found slugs the only tiresome ones, though showing them the whip will generally make them energetic.

The use and abuse of riding schools has been well illustrated in the British Army. Up to recent years instruction was rarely carried out in the open, and the whole standard of riding and horse-training was judged by the performance of one or two exercises called single and double rides. These consisted in a monotonous sequence of turns and circles, which, owing to constant weekly practice, the horses performed mechanically, without the volition of the

rider. As a test of equitation they were useless. In 1902 orders were issued practically forbidding the use of the schools for instruction, presumably to make it impossible for a man to be considered a horseman or a troop-horse a trained animal if they could only perform a single ride within four walls, and in company with other men and horses. A more reasonable state of affairs now obtains.

Collective exercises in the school are doubtless useful for trained men, but they should be of a varied character, so that the error of the past shall not be repeated.

As soon as a man has a firm seat he must go out of doors, or he will make but little further progress. Within four walls he cannot learn the real meaning of the word "hands;" for this freedom for man and horse is required. One of the secrets of training both of them being continuous instruction, a school is valuable to ensure it, as it makes the instructor independent of the weather. But whilst the man's early lessons will all take place in the school, the young horse should only remain in it until he will move forward quietly. He can return to it later to be "collected."

The ordinary English riding school is too narrow, and therefore ill fitted for the instruction of the beginner, whether horse or man, a portion of whose early lesons should consist of moving on large circles. Riding schools abroad are very much larger.

The rudiments of postillion and artillery driving can be taught better in school than anywhere else.

XIII

SADDLE WITH STIRRUPS v. NUMNAH

XIII

SADDLE WITH STIRRUPS v. NUMNAH

"They (the stirrups) are a great easement to the rider, by supporting the toe, and prevent the dangling of the legs. They are an assistance, because the rider can preserve his balance with less attention." ADAMS.

THERE are two distinct schools of thought on this subject. Up to 1820 none of the best authorities, as far as I can gather, ever advocated that the beginner should have stirrups, though the practice was common amongst civilian riding masters. The lad who was taught with a view to going to hounds probably commenced his lessons with stirrups, but he learnt under no recognized teacher of what was then called "riding," a term which no exponent of Haute Ecole would have applied to the performance of the hunting man proper. It was, in fact, the distrust and contempt so long subsisting between the two schools which stultified the riding of the British nation in the last century.

Fillis and Baucher (*circa* 1850) shared the old-

time view on the subject, whilst Hayes and Dwyer, all-round riders and authors whom no man can ignore, would both have us commence with stirrups. Hayes says: "In order to give the grown-up beginner confidence I would strongly advocate that . . . he should have a broad-seated saddle covered with buckskin and that he should be allowed to ride at first with stirrups."

Dwyer, of the Austrian Imperial Service, who turned out many fine horsemen, writes:—"The advocates of beginning without stirrups say you must first give a pupil a seat, and then, when he has acquired balance and a hold on his horse, you can give him the additional assistance of stirrups. Now, the most difficult thing to attain is balance, and the stirrup was devised for the purpose of assisting in acquiring and maintaining it; and it is, therefore, just as reasonable to act in this manner as it would be to set a boy to learn swimming without corks and bladders, and when he learnt to support himself to give him artificial aids."

When Hayes wrote the passage previously quoted he no doubt had it in his mind that a fall would not be such a set-back to a boy as to a man, his lighter

weight and softer bones making the unpleasant experience of less consequence, and the effects, as far as nerve and confidence were concerned, of little or no duration. Figure-skating is notoriously more quickly learned by boys than by men for the same reason. It may also have struck Hayes that the anxious parent would not look forward with equanimity to the likelihood of his young hopeful being dragged.

No European nation now adheres to the rigid rule of not allowing a man stirrups until he has acquired a firm seat. In the British Army official opinion has changed twice on the subject within the last ten years, and the instructor is now allowed to do as he likes. The German recruit has a few lessons on a blanket, but when serious instruction commences he is given a saddle with stirrups.

Doubtless one of the reasons why early writers did not favor stirrups was that they followed the sound rule of placing the man in the saddle as they eventually wished him to appear when a finished horseman, and to do this the stirrups would have to have been fitted so long as to be practically useless to the novice. Fillis admits this, and goes so far as to

say that no beginner can keep his stirrups. The advent of, or rather the return to, the hunting seat, has done away with the necessity for straightening the leg, and the retention of stirrups is now a matter of no difficulty. Another reason given by the non-stirrup school was that the leg never straightened sufficiently if the pupil was allowed stirrups. At the risk of beating a dead horse I must again say that I think their anxiety was unfounded; many officers and men who had ridden before joining the Service learned the old straight-legged seat quickly enough in the riding school, and it cannot be doubted that most of them—and I include myself—had been taught at home with stirrups.

Hayes and Dwyer advise stirrups to *prevent* the leg from straightening; they evidently had not studied the reliefs in the British Museum representing horsemen on Assyrian battlefields, or this view of the matter would not have caused them any anxiety, as there were no irons in those days. The make and shape of the rider and the way he is taught have more to do with the ultimate height of his knee in the saddle than any stirrup.

Quite lately I was discussing the subject of stir-

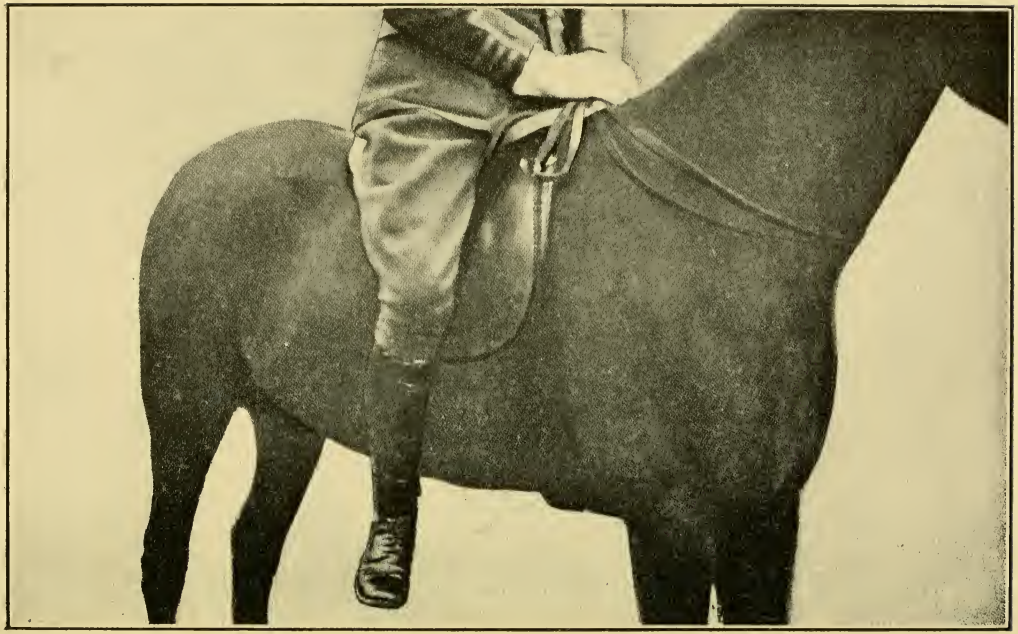

Plate XVI.—The Position of the Beginner's Leg when He Tires

rups *v.* no stirrups with a Riding Master who was brought up in the no-stirrup school. He told me that when he gave private lessons he always allowed them, as he found that his pupils left him if he did not. This brings out the human side of the question.

If the irons are dispensed with it is much better to carry out the instruction on a numnah: I have experimented with both. The pupil is nearer to his horse and the friction from contact with the numnah is very much greater than is obtainable on a stripped saddle; which has, however, one advantage over the numnah in that it gives a firmer hold to the hands of the beginner who is in difficulties.

If he is on a numnah, the beginner, who naturally has no idea of balance, always keeps himself from falling off by grip and by the aid of the reins if he has them: the former very soon tires him to the extent of his having to be dismounted for a rest, because he has no stirrups to relieve the strain. Those pupils who have not been previously strengthened by a course of gripping exercises are unable to maintain the correct position of the leg for any length of time, and it soon relapses into the attitude shown in Plate XVI, when muscles which are almost useless

to the good horseman are being brought into play. Those who have done the exercise before beginning to ride will tire less quickly, but even they are very far from comfortable with so little idea of balance. I have tried to give the beginner confidence and lessen his fatigue by the use of a roller-pad with handles, placed over the numnah, but it does not answer for the following reasons. The rider works forward on to the pad and is liable to become galled. If the horse checks, and he grasps the handles, the upper part of the body pitches forward, as illustrated in Fig. 2, and when jumping begins he is apt to rely on his hands alone and instinctively to loosen the grip on his legs. I would by no means recommend holding on at all with the arms, but if it must be done let the hold be at the back of the seat for anything but jumping,[1] which will more or less preserve the balance of the bodyy, the forward movement of the shoulders being at once checked. It will also be found easier to pull than to push in this particular

[1] In jumping the body must always be on the forward side of the perpendicular, therefore it is best to hold on by the mane if at all. The Italians recommend this. The system of teaching I shall advocate makes holding on by the hands absolutely unnecessary.

instance; let the reader sit loosely on a horse and try it.

The advantages derived from beginning with stirrups are as follows. The comparative comfort and

Fig. 2.—Holding on by the leaping-pad.

security of the pupil are assured from the first, and fatigue much reduced; if he is riding with reins he is not so likely to depend on them when in difficulties,

and acquires the valuable habit of leaning inwards without risk of a fall when the horse turns. Furthermore, the beginner can rise to the trot, and thus avoid the discomfort of continual bumping. Later on, riding without stirrups can be given in gradually increased doses. I have never experienced the slightest difficulty in getting a pupil well down into his seat with this system of instruction, even when the saddle has been a high arched one. Falls, however, cannot be avoided when side-balance is lost beyond a certain point: when this occurs, the man's leg flies out and he comes off. What might, on the other hand, be called fore-and-aft balance, or the balance applied by the rider in jumping, receives but little assistance from the stirrups, which are free to swing backwards and forwards. With a careful instructor the risk of dragging is so small as to be hardly worth considering, but safety stirrups are, of course, a good thing if available.

Some of the early-pattern irons had a swivel at the top of the arch, on which they revolved, making them always handy to the rider's foot. This form of stirrup was doubtless given up as unsuitable for riding with the foot home, as when in use the flat of

the leather did not necessarily come against the rider's boot, and it gradually went out in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Some writers place but little value on the stirrup as a help under adverse circumstances, Adams going so far as to say it is useless. Few experienced riders will agree with this; on a bad puller, for example, the action of the arms must be weaker without stirrups, as the base is weaker. This point is clearly brought out by Cesaresco.

XIV

REINS v. NO REINS

Plate XVII.—A Question of "Hands."

Sportsman (who has come off over the tail)—"You silly ass, you needn't laugh. Can't you understand the reins were so slippery I couldn't get any hold!"—By special permission of the proprietors of "Punch."

XIV

REINS v. NO REINS

"All riders think they hold their horses, but most hold themselves." COUNT E. MARTINENGO CESARESCO.

"Bad riders use the reins as a means of balancing themselves in the saddle, and this is especially done in the hunting field."

WALSH.

WHEN it was that reins came into use is not very clear; some recent researches of M. Edouard Piette's amongst prehistoric remains in France have brought to light carvings on bone of the Glyptic Age, which undoubtedly represent bridled horses, although the rudeness of the design leaves us in some doubt as to whether the reins were attached to a nose-band, or if what was probably a leather thong passed through the horse's mouth, and formed a make-shift bridle. Be this as it may, when we come to historical times we have proof that it was comparatively late before the use of reins became general; the inhabitants of Numidia and Mauritania, and, according to Berenger, of "Nasa-

monia, Massilia, and other adjacent tracts of the same region," rode without reins in peace and war. Livy the historian (born 59 B. C.) divides cavalry into those with and those without the bridle, the former being heavy horsemen.

Bridles are now used with more understanding than they have ever been. The "lupus" snaffle of the Romans, made in imitation of the teeth of a wolf, and the long-cheeked cruel bit of a later date, are things of the past; they necessitated barbarous methods of horse training and riding. The introduction of reins is, however, responsible for the want of perfect balance in many horsemen who have never ridden without them. As Mr. Tozer has recently told us, some of the early instructors deliberately advised novices to catch hold of the reins tightly in order to keep their seat with greater ease. I think these gentlemen performed a work of supererogation in doing so, as the novice needs no telling to hold on by the reins the moment he gets into difficulties; the most elementary laws of self-preservation direct that he should.

All teachers advocate quitting stirrups at some stage, at least, of the course, in order to hasten the

acquisition of a firm seat, and those who do not recommend that reins should also be dispensed with forget the obvious fact that they are nearly as much support to the pupil as the stirrup, perhaps more so, and that if they are retained throughout the course the instructor is defeating his own ends. It would be just as reasonable to deprive the man of his reins and allow him to keep his stirrups the whole time; the results would—all things being equal—be superior.

Balance is harder to learn if a convulsive grasp of the reins prevents a man's body from following the movements of his mount, besides which it is unfair on a beginner to expect him to control a horse before he has a firm seat: it is asking him to attempt too much. In the initial stages of jumping the reins may save a fall, but they often produce one by pulling the rider out of the saddle. In experienced hands they encourage the horse to jump; in bad and inexperienced ones they make rushers and refusers. Again, purely from the animal's side of the question, he is put to considerable pain in having his mouth pulled about; he becomes an uncertain jumper, and useless for the purpose of teaching a future rider

the meaning of "hands." A horse will last longer and be a better stayer if he has not to use his head to support his rider; he wants it for other things, and comfort and peace are as necessary to him as to a man.

I do not wish to imply that correct balance is impossible unless a man has learnt to ride without reins; there are many fine horsemen to-day who have never ridden without either reins or stirrups in their lives, but they are exceptional men, and would have attained perfection all the sooner had their early training been without reins. I have seen other men, reputed to be good riders, who fell off when asked to jump a small hurdle without them, thereby showing that they had never acquired correct balance. I have no hesitation in saying that in making an all-round horseman it is very much quicker to begin without reins at once than to wait until the rider's education is almost complete. Hayes rightly says that holding on by them is a most difficult fault to eradicate if once learnt.

At the French Horse Show of 1865 at the Champs Elysées, the Saumur pupils gave a wonderful display of Haute Ecole riding and other feats,

the least successful of which was jumping a low hurdle (Thormanby). Later on, officers on the Continent began organizing jumping competitions and steeplechases, and as the outcome of their experience declared that the best and most scientific method of instruction in riding was to commence without reins. Jumping had taught them that more freedom of movement for horse and man was necessary, and that this was the way to attain it. We Englishmen alone lagged behind, though since 1907 the custom has been gradually gaining ground. In our Army, instead of following the advice and benefiting by the experience of our own writers on the subject, we have waited for Europe to show us the best way.

M. Bourgelat, writing in 1744, remarked that riding with the end of the rein in the right hand might be practised with great caution on a well "dressed" horse, and that it gave "prodigious grace to the horseman"; but care should be taken to "counterbalance" by leaning the body back! Berenger recommended instruction without reins, Pembroke also, but only for "unfeeling fellows," and Adams prescribed it for those who did not

benefit from repeated "explanation and admonition." At a later date we have writers with more decided opinions; Whyte Melville, Walsh (for some time editor of the *Field*), Rarey, Hayes, and Dwyer: all are strong on the point of allowing no man to jump a horse with reins unless he can do so without. Whyte Melville says that "the boy should never be trusted with a bridle until it is perfectly immaterial to him whether he has hold of it or not."

To carry out the practice in Austria they kept the pupil on the longe, but this is quite unnecessary where there is more than one rider, as horses will always follow a leader in the riding school or manège; it is only needful that the first horse should be ridden with reins. If the horses are at all unruly, first the odd numbers of the ride can drop their reins and then the even numbers. If the child beginner is nervous at first, he can go on the leading-rein, and he may with advantage be given a pair of ladies' safety irons to ride in.

It is very hard on the beginner to deprive him of all means of support when first mounted, and I consider it unsound even if time is no object. I therefore strongly advocate commencing with stirrups, and only very occasionally allowing the pupil reins.

XV

AN IMPROVED METHOD

XV

AN IMPROVED METHOD

"All that our fathers taught us of old pleases us now no more."
KIPLING.

I PROPOSE in this chapter to describe all that my experience has led me to consider essential in teaching a man the elements of riding, with special attention to those points which are most often misunderstood by instructors. Without claiming that the following system as a whole is an original one, I submit that in three important particulars, viz., the preliminary gripping exercises, the successful use of the strap joining the stirrups, and the early and constant jumping without reins, it introduces new features of great value to teachers of equitation. It aims at inspiring confidence in the pupil by making falling off as difficult as possible; at the rapid acquisition of that bedrock of good horsemanship—a firm and well-balanced seat, which is the only foundation of good hands; and at the easy suppleness of body which marks the proficient.

Preliminary Exercises.

"In all labor there is profit." *Proverbs* xiv. v. 23.

The gripping exercises for beginning to develop those muscles which are used in riding have already received mention: I will merely state here that they are invaluable as a preparation for riding proper and save a good deal of time, as the novice who has undergone them is physically able to apply his legs to his horse to keep his seat, and is fitted to undergo the fatigue of his lessons.

The Strap [1]

"Press not the falling man too far!"—Shakespeare (*Henry VIII.*)

If rapid progress is to be made the pupil must feel as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, and be given confidence by avoidance of falls. A saddle covered with buckskin increases the friction between the leg and the flap, and if such a saddle is available the instructor should make use of it. The French have a saddle not unlike the Australian buck-jumping one, into which they force

[1] This appliance was suggested to me by Colonel Charles Long, late R.H.A.

the man without any reference to his make and shape, in order to get his leg into the correct position. In a minor degree, tying the stirrups together (Figs. 3 and 4), has a similar effect, but this is the smallest of the benefits derived from the use of this contrivance, which is of the greatest value. Its chief advantage is that it makes falling off under ordinary circumstances extremely difficult; the leg cannot fly out very far from the saddle in any direction, so that if balance is lost it can be regained at once without a fall, whilst if the pupil flies up into the air his feet meet the arch of the stirrup-iron and he drops back into his seat.

FIG. 3—THE STIRRUPS

(With a long-legged man the strap can be passed through a runner on the girth.)

Now, when a man falls his frame becomes rigid, and that is why he so easily breaks his bones: it therefore follows that, when *he thinks* he is

going to fall, he stiffens himself all over, and thereby loses all chance of keeping his balance. With a short experience of the strap comes confidence, and the pupil allows his muscles to relax. The importance of this result cannot be exaggerated. Assheton Smith's famous maxim that no man can be called a horseman until he knows how to fall is hardly one for a beginner.

During instruction in jumping this strap is more than useful, as the confidence it gives the pupil enables him to center his attention on the instructor and attend to his directions. After his first few jumps he loses his nervousness and begins to take pleasure in the exercise. It is now possible to give him early and continual practice in jumping low obstacles without danger of over-fatigue, which is the real secret of getting a man quickly settled into his saddle, and is the best of lessons in balance.

In France they train horses to rear and kick at the bidding of the instructor. The horse, who is called a "sauteur," is tied by the head between two padded "piliers," and the pupils mount, in turn, at the end of the lesson. The object of this is to teach the man to adjust his body to the fore-and-aft movement of the horse: side-balance does not, of course, come into play because of the horse not advancing.

Constant jumping, which is impossible in the earlier stages without the strap, will answer the purpose and is of greater benefit to the pupil: it is more practical and does not require a specially trained animal. The sauteur is, however, doubtless most useful to the "Ecuyer," for practising the "courbettes," "cabrioles," and "croupades," he has to perform daily on his own horse. At the Fort Riley Mounted Service School (Kansas) the sauteur is used for the practical purpose of teaching the pupil how to sit a buck-jumper.

The strap further makes it difficult for the novice to lose his stirrups, besides enabling him to retake them quickly after he has been riding without them by order of the instructor.

During over five years' experience of this contrivance with all sorts and conditions of men and horses, I have never seen a case of dragging. On one occasion, indeed, I caused an officer's foot to be made fast in the stirrup and had him dragged for experimental purposes, and it did not appear that the strap joining the stirrups increased the danger. As a matter of fact, with stirrups tied together it is impossible to get dragged if hung up in the stirrup on the opposite side to which the fall occurs—a common cause of accidents. Care must, however,

be taken that the strap is properly fitted. If too tight, the man's knee is brought away from the saddle and its purpose is defeated. If too loose, it of course does not come into play as soon as it might and there is a danger of the horse getting his hind-legs through it when jumping.

This contrivance should not be used after the initial stages of jumping. If the fence is big the animal is more liable to fall, when the pupil may share the fate which sometimes befalls the accomplished horseman and get mixed up with his horse on the ground.

It is incidentally worth noting that the strap is useful to anyone who has the misfortune to have to ride a bad buck-jumper, and I have been informed that it is not unknown to the cowboy. In our Colonies a rope is sometimes placed round the saddle and made fast over the rider's thighs in order to secure his seat.

Jumping

"I told him, If you will but *Sit Still*, I warrant you the *Horse* will go Well with you, *But a Man* (said he, with a great Oath) *cannot Sit Still*. Which was said Knowingly, and like a *Horse-Man*; for, to Sit Still belongs only to a *Great Master*." Newcastle.

"Do not be sure that you have a firm seat until you have tried the experiment of sitting a leap with nothing to hold on by."

Whyte Melville.

Jumping without reins for the comparative begin-

ner is almost a new practice as far as England is concerned. I will therefore enter somewhat fully into the best method of carrying it out.

It is quite possible to allow your pupils to begin jumping low obstacles at their eighth or ninth lesson, provided they have been through the preliminary gripping exercises and are riding with the strap joining the stirrups (Fig. 4).

FIG. 4.
THE STRAP.

A small log of wood or a hurdle laid flat will do to commence with, after which three or four movable hurdles similar to those shown in Fig. 5 will be required: they have the advantage of upsetting if the horse strikes them. They should be about two feet high when topped with gorse or brushwood; the double rails allow of the furze being replaced when worn, and as these fences are not fixtures they can be taken out of the training ground when not in use. They may be raised when necessary by means of wooden blocks; but for obvious reasons it is essential to have them

low at first. If the jump is fairly long the instructor will soon find wings unnecessary: I shall have more to say on this subject in the section devoted to horse-training. It will, however, not be out of place here to mention that there is very little refusing where horses are jumped without reins. Animals that have been accustomed to supporting their riders by the reins will rush a little at first, but on recovering from their astonishment at finding that the exercise no longer involves a severe jerk in the mouth, they will—unless they are very stale—neither refuse nor rush, especially if they are fed after the first fence or two.

If only one pupil is under instruction, let him be longed over on a single rein, when a man on either side should run along with the horse after the jump, to avoid bringing him round on the curve after landing, which would increase the rider's difficulties.

With a ride of several pupils, and with fairly handy horses, a jump can be put at each side of the school, and the horses allowed to go round over them in single file at suitable intervals; but in an out-door manège, where the restraining effect of the four walls is absent, it is easier to put the jumps

in the center and send the horses over them one by one. If the leader pulls up when he gets to the other side, it will be found that the other horses will go to him and stop of their own accord. An even better plan, if a spare horse is available, is to hobble him a little way from the fence on the landing side, and allow the other horses to collect round him. Although at this stage of the course the actual jumping is to take place without reins, it will be necessary that the pupil should pick them up both before and after jumping; dropping them as soon as the horse has got his head straight at the fence, and taking them up again after landing in order to steady the animal.

When riding at the log or the hurdle laid flat the trot will be a fast enough pace, but when the pupil is able to jump higher obstacles a steady canter will be easiest for both man and horse.

There is some difference of opinion as to whether it is sufficient for the pupil to hold the end of the rein in the palm of the hand, let out to the full extent, or if he should drop it altogether and fold his arms. The first method certainly removes the possibility of the rein coming over the horse's head on

landing, and it is not so unnerving to the novice, but it does not afford the same lesson in balance, as it gives some support to the rider. As a rule any horse will pull up when he gets his foot through the reins, and if not he can be trained to do so. The advantages of folding the arms in front of the body are, that it is left perfectly free to conform to the movements of the horse, and that the arms cannot be used to maintain balance. It incidentally develops the pupil's nerve and teaches him to keep his arms and hands quiet. It is therefore best to begin with the end of the rein held in the full of the hand, and to pass on quickly to practice with arms folded.

As to what instructions the pupil should be given, let him be told to grip tightly with his knees and thighs, and to lean forward when going at the fence; if he is successful in this the body will soon swing in harmony with the horse. It will be found that most beginners are inclined to lean back when the horse takes off.

When the pupil can sit over a small obstacle without reins and stirrups he should be made to jump the same thing with the reins before being

FIG. 5.—The beginner's arms correctly placed for riding at a fence.

asked to negotiate anything higher. This takes longer than any inexperienced person would suppose, thereby showing how difficult it is to regulate the actions of the arms, shoulders, and hands, even

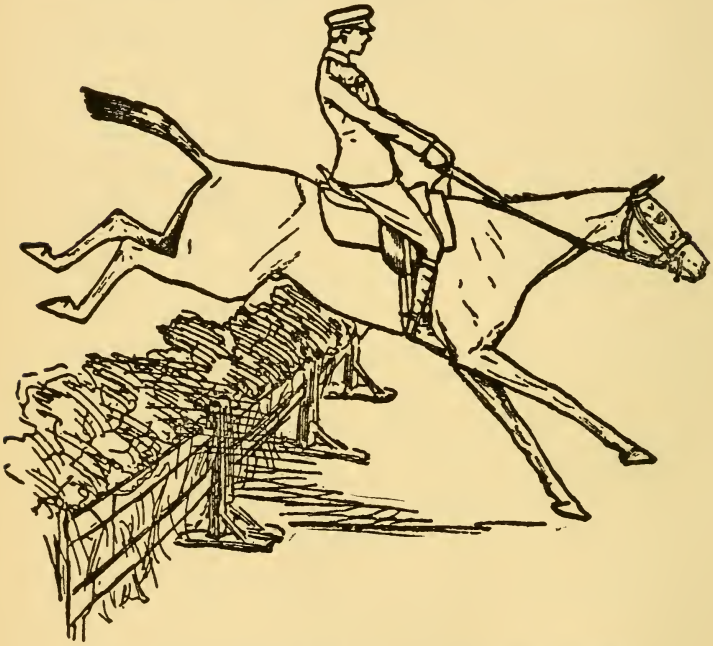

FIG. 6.—The beginner's arms correctly placed when landing.

when the seat is comparatively firm. To make sure that the horse will have as much room as possible on landing, and that his rider will not be pulled out of the saddle, his arms and hands should be

correctly placed as in Fig. 5 each time he is about to ride at the fence. The importance of this precaution cannot be exaggerated, and never seems to be properly recognized by the pupil. The evils arising from its neglect are illustrated in Figs. 7 and 8. The position of the body is not quite forward enough in Figs. 5 and 6, which are only intended to illustrate the position of the arms.

It will also be found that when he is jumping, the novice's shoulders do not open, nor his hands drop downwards and forwards as they should do when the horse is descending. Experience has taught me that the quickest and best way to put this right is to tell the pupil to let the reins slip through his fingers as he extends his arms when the horse is in the air, however small the obstacle. By doing this, his seat will not be interfered with, and those wooden movements of the arms and wrists which are so easily acquired and so hard to lose willl be avoided. I am told that the Ecuyers at Saumur very generally follow this custom of letting the reins slip when the horse is on the downward plane. Some of those jockeys who do not land over a fence leaning forward, give extra head-room to the horse

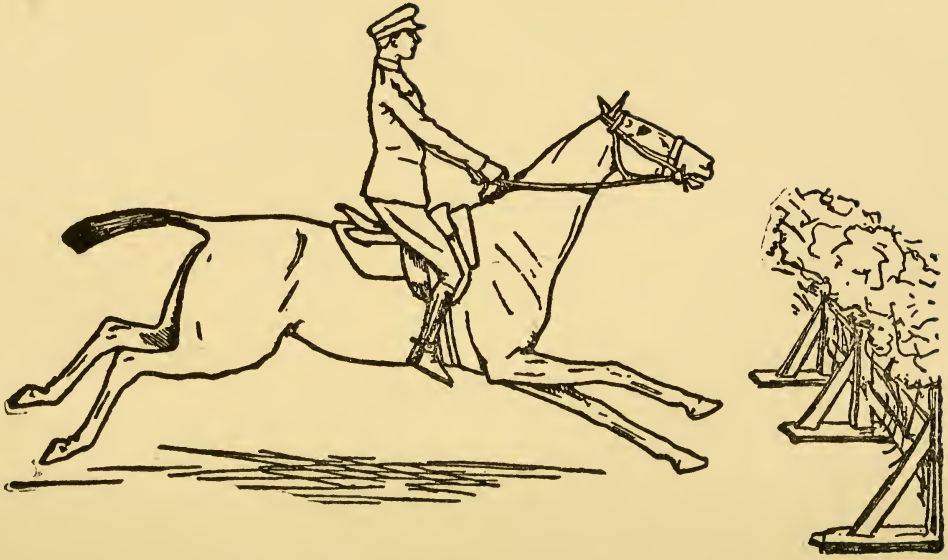

FIG. 7.—The beginner holding his reins too short.

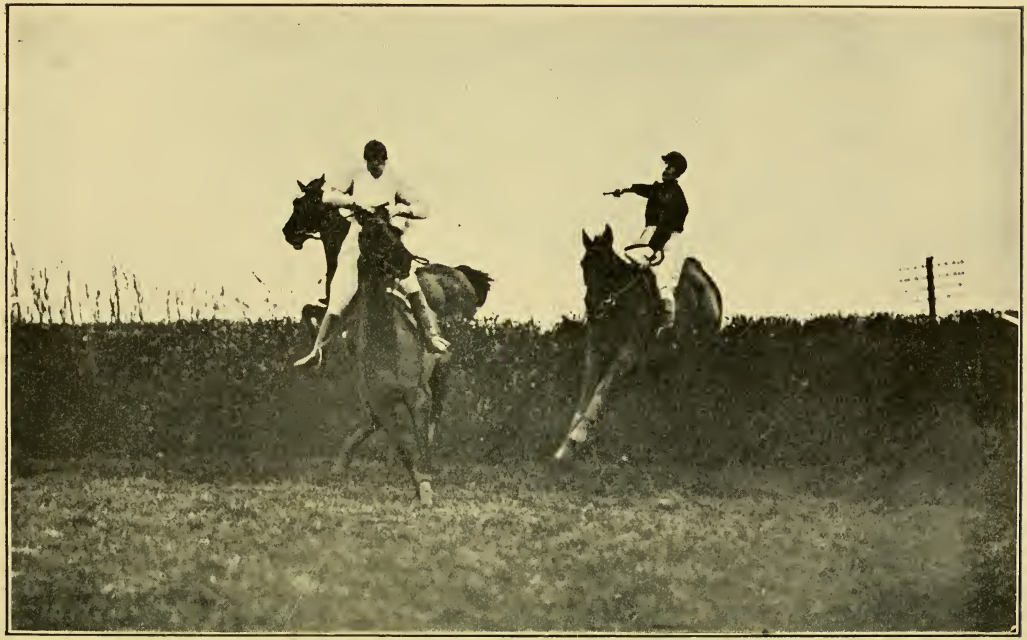

Plate XVIII.—Giving Extra Head-room by Taking the Right Hand Off the Reins

by taking one hand off the reins and slewing the free shoulder backwards (Plate XVIII), thus allowing the other shoulder and arm to advance consid-

FIG. 8.—Result of holding the reins too short.

erably farther to the front than would be possible with the shoulders square. It would not surprise me to be told that some of these gentlemen were

unaware that this was their practice, but the onlooker sees most of the game, especially when accompanied by a camera.

Some horses undoubtedly require more headroom, if the jump is a high one, than a man can give them without leaning too far forward on landing, and some men are so short in the arms that they are physically incapable of giving a horse enough freedom without letting the reins slip, or by taking one hand off the reins and bringing the opposite shoulder forward.

After a certain amount of practice over one jump, a second one should be placed at a distance of about five yards from it, and the man taught to negotiate this in-and-out. Phillips mentions this as being an admirable lesson for the purpose of securing a firm seat for riding kickers, but his directions as to how to poise the body during the process would lead to disaster. He recommends that the single jump should be a standing one—the hardest of all for beginners—and advises the man to lean back as the horse takes off.

Half an hour's jumping a day will not be too much for the novice after his tenth lesson; it is but a small effort to the horse over low obstacles.

HINTS TO INSTRUCTORS

"He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly."
PROVERBS XIV, v. 17.
"He that regardeth reproof is prudent."
PROVERBS XV, v. 5.

To make any system of teaching riding a success, we require a trained horse of a temperate disposition. If he is riding a slug, the pupil should carry a whip; remember that he does not know how, and therefore cannot use his legs, and will only tire himself in the attempt to do so. The accepted meaning of the word "trained" will be given later. I do not wish to imply that such a horse is absolutely necessary; a man can learn to sit on any animal that will not run away.

The instructor should first of all be a horseman himself, although there is no greater fallacy than the common idea, prevalent only in England and her colonies, that because a man can ride he can teach others to do so. He should know what he is at, and have an encouraging and sympathetic disposition. The teacher of riding must remember that nerve grows best out of confidence, and that before now pluck has been killed by avoidable accidents. He

should work chiefly by demonstration, and explain the meaning of his instructions as he goes along. It is much easier to ride up to a man and show him how to sit or how to handle the horse than merely to tell him how to do so, and he will be far more likely to remember it; he will also try twice as hard to place himself correctly if he understands what he is being asked to perform.

The instructor should never shout; it affects the horse adversely as well as the man, and he must always keep his temper. Shouting at a horse is a sign of weakness in either a rider or a trainer of young horses.

The pupil should have well-fitting breeches, so that he may not get rubbed or galled, and his boots should be supple and smooth in the sole and have a long, flat heel, for it has often happened that men have been hung up in the stirrup because their boots lacked these qualities. Rising to the trot is uncomfortable in thick boots if the ball of the foot is on the iron.

Let the beginner saddle and bridle his own mount; this is the most practical way of teaching him how the gear should fit. The bridle should be a single-

reined, thick, smooth snaffle. When the reins are in use they should be held long, and one in each hand. The saddle should fit closely to the horse; if it does not, the weight of the man's body is raised and he is less steady when the horse is in motion, making balance more difficult; a closely-fitting saddle will enable the rider to get down into his seat.

Many and various are the directions given as to mounting; some authorities would have us make six separate movements of it. Mounting on the near side has become customary because in the old days riders carried heavy weapons in their right hands, and could not conveniently have mounted on the off side,[1] but all beginners should learn to do so on both. Let the pupil turn his back to the horse's head, and if he is mounting from the left, place his left foot in the stirrup, catch hold of the horse's mane if he has one, and if not, the pommel, and spring lightly into the saddle. Some authorities do

[1] In very early days, before stirrups were invented, there was a hook on the man's spear on which he placed his foot and raised himself when he wished to mount. At other times horses were taught to kneel for their riders to get on, or short ladders were used, and it is recorded that in some countries noblemen were accustomed to mount by the aid of their attendants' backs. We also hear of mounting-stones being placed by the roadside for the convenience of travelers.

not recommend the back being turned to the horse's head, but it has these advantages—if the animal moves on it helps the man into the saddle, and prevents his being kicked if the horse is tickled with the toe in mounting. The only objection is that a playful horse may give you a pinch in the region of the coat-tails, but surely this would be an additional incentive to springing quickly into the saddle.

As to the way the man should hold himself on the horse, some writers would have no directions given him at first, whilst others would, so to speak, place him by rule of thumb, even to the length of making him hold his hands in the center of his body, and exactly three inches from it! Harry Hieover, a clever horseman and knowing writer, says: "You don't sit bolt upright on your chair; what on earth makes you do it on your horse? Leave it to the soldiers." In this as in all else there is a golden mean; give too many directions and you get stiffness, give none and you make balance more difficult for the tyro. Explain to your charge that his difficulties will be increased unless he gets his seat well under him, excepting, of course, when rising to the trot, or going very fast, when his shoulders should natu-

rally be advanced. An erect carriage can be assumed without hollowing the back or sitting stiffly.

Fitting the stirrups to the pupil's comfort is of great importance, and the best way of doing so is to place him in the saddle with his knee at what appears to be the height to suit his thigh, and then to stand in front of the horse and shorten or lengthen the leathers until the base of the stirrup is in line with the sole of the boot. Further adjustment may be needed when the pupil has been riding about for a time. As Rarey says: "There are certain rules laid down as to the length of the man's stirrup leathers, but the only good rule is that they should be short enough to give the rider full confidence in his seat, and full power over a pulling horse." This sound maxim may well be borne in mind when fitting stirrups.

As much practice as possible should be given to the pupil without fatiguing him or allowing him to be chafed. A man will learn in a third the number of lessons if he begins with one a day and goes on to two, instead of riding only twice a week.

When some progress has been made, a grown-up pupil should have a change of horses, especially for

work without stirrups; this is easy enough when two or three men are under instruction, but presents difficulties with a single learner and a limited stud. If riding is acquired on one horse only, the instructor must not expect his pupil to show anything like the same proficiency the first time he gets on to another one.

The necessary intervals for rest should not be wasted; the points of a horse, his simple ailments, and horsemastership, are very important parts of any horseman's education, and are too often neglected. The sportsman's pleasure depends upon his possessing a sufficient knowledge of these subjects; and as far as the soldier is concerned, the latest quick-firing gun is useless unless it can be brought into action at the required moment; very little information is to be obtained from mounted scouts if their horses cannot travel; wide strategic movements by cavalry cannot be thought of, nor the army in the field properly fed, without continual and tireless care of the horse. The army with the fittest horses at the outbreak of hostilities has a great initial advantage, and, providing that the officers and men are well versed in their care and management,

this advantage remains to the end of the campaign. In the South African War the English losses in horseflesh amounted to the appalling total of 340,000, and it is idle to suppose that better horsemanagement might not have considerably lessened the death-roll.

The next section consists of a rough guide to fifty lessons in equitation, which can be modified to suit the pupil's strength and fitness. His progress will, to a great extent, depend upon himself.

XVI

INSTRUCTIONAL EXERCISES

XVI

INSTRUCTIONAL EXERCISES

"Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge."
PROVERBS XII. v. 1.

"Be to his faults a little blind,
Be to his virtues ever kind."
JOHN JORROCKS'S *version of Matthew Prior.*

THE following is a rough guide for progressive riding lessons, each of about an hour's duration, which are to follow ten short lessons on the dummy horse. Quicker results will be obtained after riding commences if the pupil continues his exercises on the dummy horse at a separate hour of the day.

Proficiency in riding is attained more quickly by some than by others, as in everything else, and it will be found better after the thirtieth lesson to separate the good from the indifferent pupils. As before mentioned, if only one beginner is under instruction his horse should be longed; if there is more than one, a man who can ride should for the first few lessons take the lead round the manège or

school, in order to set the pace. The detail of the necessary aid and indications will be found at the end of the section.

First Lesson

The pupil should be taught by practical demonstration how to mount, hold his reins (if this has not already been done on the dummy horse), and how to make his horse move off at a walk and turn to the right and left. The instructor need not be particular at this stage as to whether the animal turns on his forehand, center, or haunches.

The first day's lesson should merely consist in walking round the school, first on one rein and then on the other, and the men should dismount at frequent intervals; but rising in the saddle without reins should be practised, as it must be remembered that whatever exercise the pupils have had on dummy horses, those useful machines do not move forward, and that the conditions are therefore somewhat different on real ones. All the above instructions can be given to the pupil on the longe if necessary.

Second Lesson

Balancing exercises to be commenced, and continued at a walk up to the ninth lesson: hands held above the head, touching the toe on either side, and leaning backwards and forwards in the saddle.

Balancing exercises cannot be undertaken at this early stage unless previously practised on the dummy horse. In the Austrian Army beginners are supplied with india-rubber balls attached by an elastic to the wrist. It is claimed that catching the ball affords a useful lesson in balance, but I have not found this practice necessary.

Short trotting lessons with and without reins but with stirrups.[1]

Third, Fourth, and Fifth Lessons

Short trotting lessons as above and also without reins or stirrups. Once round the manège will be found sufficient when stirrups are first dispensed with. Part of these lessons, and subsequent ones up to the thirtieth, will be done on a circle at either

[1] It is a help with raw beginners to use horses which will answer to the voice, and will trot, walk, and halt at the word of the instructor.

end of the manège, first on one hand and then on the other. In the initial stages the principle must be observed that the tyro is never to be allowed to use his reins unless he is riding with stirrups, because he can have very little control over his horse without the purchase they afford.

Sixth Lesson

The same as No. 5, with the addition of two or three canters with stirrups and reins.

Seventh and Eighth Lessons

Trotting lesson without reins, and as much without stirrups as the man can stand without fatigue. Short cantering lesson with stirrups and without reins. Three or four jumps at a trot over a very low obstacle about one foot high, with stirrups well home; end of the rein to be held in the full of the hand.

Ninth to Twelfth Lessons (*inclusive*)

Trotting and short cantering lessons without reins or stirrups. Balancing exercises at a trot. Number of jumps to be increased daily, and

negotiated at a canter. A few jumps without reins and with stirrups at the end of each lesson.

Thirteenth to Sixteenth Lessons (*inclusive*)

Same as above: all jumping to be done without reins. At least twenty jumps for each pupil. Frequent changes of horse *excepting for jumping.*

Seventeenth Lesson

Jumping lesson over a one-foot obstacle at a canter, without stirrups; the end of the rein to be held in the full of the right hand.

Trotting, cantering, and balancing exercises as above.

Eighteenth to Twentieth Lessons (*inclusive*)

Same as above, with the addition of balancing exercises at a canter, and frequent change of horses for jumping.

Jumping without reins or stirrups gradually introduced.[1]

[1] The first time the pupil jumps without reins or stirrups he should be cautioned against leaning back: in fact he may be told to lean well forward, as grief is rare from leaning too far forward, but is sure to come if the body is leant too far back.

Twenty-first to Thirtieth Lessons (*inclusive*)

Jumping with reins and stirrups over a one-foot obstacle, and then over two one-foot jumps five yards apart, to form an in-and-out, and thirdly over a single jump, to be gradually raised to a height of two feet, and negotiated without reins but with stirrups.

Reining back.

Trotting, cantering lessons, etc., as before.

Thirty-first to Fortieth Lessons (*inclusive*)

First half-hour each day of independent work for each pupil in the open:—Cantering on the circle, and passaging.

Second half-hour in the school or manège:—Jumping a two-foot obstacle, gradually heightened to three feet, alternately with and without reins and stirrups.

Fortieth to Fiftieth Lessons (*inclusive*)

First half-hour:—Independent work; making a

horse change at a canter by the movement of the body; the use of the body as a pivot in turning (see "Distribution of the Rider's Weight").

Figure-of-eight at a canter.

One-handed riding (see "Use and Misuse of the Hands").

Riding over broken ground and up and down hill.

Pupils who are sufficiently advanced to be allowed spurs and a double bridle.

Jumping (over single and double obstacles) of a height suitable to the pupil's progress.

As before mentioned, properly-trained horses are a great advantage, but good results can be obtained on badly-trained ones.

In 1907 I experimented with a class of Horse Artillery trumpeters; they went through a course of forty lessons similar to those above, but they also had thirty lessons on the dummy horse. At the end of the course they could—

Jump a bushed gorse fence 3 ft. 9 in. high and 3 ft. 4 in. broad, with and without reins or stirrups;

Jump an in-and-out 3 ft. 9 in. high and 1 ft. 6 in. broad;

Do a figure-of-eight correctly at a canter;

Ride up and down a steep incline at any pace;

Gallop a horse in the open and pull up quickly.

The instructor, Sergeant-Major J. Lynch (W. O.), was a very exceptional man, of long experience, and the horses were perfectly trained. I wish to emphasize the fact that a first-class instructor is invaluable.

Since these experiments were first made it has been found possible to pass out classes of ordinary recruits with a firm seat independent of the reins in an average of the same number of lessons, and without any of them having had a fall.

No Continental nation has attempted anything of the sort in the time.

The following is a description of the combined use of the aid and the indications, to be explained and demonstrated to the pupil as the different movements occur in the instructional exercises:—

To make the horse move off at a walk.—Ease the reins and apply both legs without drawing them back.

To make the horse turn to the right.—Lean slightly to the right, pull the right rein, and apply

the left leg drawn back in order to stay the horse's quarters when the turn is completed.

To make the horse turn to the left.—Reverse the indications.

To stop.—A steady but light pull on both reins.

To make the horse trot.—The same indications should be used as for making him start at a walk, but with increased pressure of the legs.

Cantering.—To make a horse strike off at a canter with the near foreleg leading, apply the right rein,[1] and the right leg drawn back. Reverse the indications for the off fore. If a horse is cantering on the wrong leg, *i. e.,* the outward one, wait till he gets to the end of the manège, and then direct the pupil to pull his head into the corner as he turns. He will then change on to the inward leg; if not, he should be pulled up into a trot and made to strike off afresh. As a rule no difficulty will be experienced in this direction when moving on the

[1] The right rein is chosen, in order to advance the horse's left shoulder and at the same time to take the weight off it by bringing the horse's head slightly to the right. Some writers object to the head being inclined either way, as they say it is apt to make the horse canter crab-fashion, but I have never found this to happen in practice when the action on the mouth is only momentary. If the rein in question is kept permanently shortened in the riding school the horse will certainly go crab-fashion to avoid the wall.

circle, as it is natural for the horse to lead with his inward leg. The method of making an untrained horse equally handy on either foreleg at a canter will be dealt with in the section on "Futher Horse-training."

Reining back.—The horse should be put back a length at a time by a gentle feeling of both reins, whilst the rider's legs keep the quarters from flying out and prevent the horse from lowering his head and so getting out of hand.

Passaging.—The passage, a common term in English riding-schools, means either moving the horse sideways with his head slightly leading or moving him diagonally, the latter movement being sometimes known as the "half-passage"; this must not be confused with the "shoulder in," in which the horse's head is bent away from the direction in which he is going. On the Continent the word "passage" means a high and collected trot. To passage to the right, feel the right rein a little stronger than the left, and apply the left leg drawn back. To passage to the left reverse the above. This is a most useful lesson as a preparation for gate-opening.

Some teachers of riding will consider that the so-called "aids" given in the above lesson are, to say the least of it, insufficient, both in number and detail, but I hold that this is not the case if the horse is trained and balanced. I do not think that enough distinction is made in equine literature between the "aids" required for the trained and the untrained animal. I have before me now a widely-read book on riding, and as an example of unnecessary detail I will quote the instructions it gives for pulling a horse up to a standstill. "Close both legs, feel both reins, raise the hands, bring the weight of the body back, and relax the pressure of the legs and hands as soon as the horse halts." Now, a man uses the pressure of the lower part of his legs to start his horse; it therefore seems unreasonable to do the same thing when he wishes the animal to stop. It may, however, be necessary to apply the legs to the horse when he is halted, should he evince a disposition to back. Ladies who still ride as their mothers did, stop their horses very well with no pressure from the legs: why then should it be necessary for the man? Again, why raise both hands? The raising or lowering of the hands should be unneces-

sary if the horse is well balanced and carries his head properly; if he does not answer to this description it is just as likely as not that you will have to lower your hands to make him pull up.

A very knowledgeable man on matters equine, and a fine man to hounds, remarked after reading through the above: "Why give the indications for cantering first on one leg and then on the other? Nobody cares when they are in the field which leg a horse is leading with; all they care about is that the animal should know how to change legs if he turns quickly and finds himself leading with the outward one. Why not simply say, 'To make a horse canter, catch him by the head and press him hard with the legs'? This is what any self-taught rider does." There is truth enough in this, and every rider does not want to be a horse trainer, but the answer to it is as follows: Unless a horse canters round the school or manège with his inward leg leading he is liable to come down at the corners, and therefore for the learner's sake certain simple indications must be laid down for making the animal start on the inward leg. No ordinary rider will bother his head either to remember or to apply

complicated aids, and no novice could do so if he would.

The indications for the "shoulder in" are purposely omitted here, as I consider that a horse's head should not be turned away from the direction in which he is going; the passage and half-passage are all-sufficient for diagonal and side movements.

Although the subject of horse training is not here under discussion, I would remind the reader that a strong and frequent application of the legs is indispensable in the making of a young horse.

PART II

ON TRAINING HORSES

XVII

WHAT TO TEACH

XVII

WHAT TO TEACH

"Now, in equitation there can be no divided empire, and the horse will be master if the man is not." WHYTE MELVILLE.

IF teaching the man to ride is an art, training the horse is a much higher and more difficult one, demanding expert knowledge, good horsemanship, abounding patience, ready resource, and a quick, observant eye. The "colt without understanding" not only, as Berenger says, has to learn the language of man, but must be gentled, mouthed, and taught to go "balanced" in his paces. In addition to this his muscles and sinews must be so developed that when he is trained he is thoroughly well fitted to do the work that will be demanded of him.

Balance as applied to a horse is not very generally understood in England, which may in some degree account for the lack of it in many so-called "trained animals." He should be permanently

balanced, unless nature has done it for him, to enable him to go lightly in front when required, in order that he may be a pleasant ride.

To be at his best *when ridden* the horse must instinctively balance himself at all paces and in all situations, and educating him to do this may be termed the alpha and omega of horse training.

The colt instinctively learns how to balance himself from birth: by raising or lowering the head and neck he shifts his balance backwards and forwards and does not feel his weight any more than we do ours; but when he is backed his conformation makes all the difference to his ability to adjust himself to the new conditions. He has now to carry some 150 lbs. placed above and behind his normal center of gravity, and this and the undeveloped condition of the muscles of his back and limbs accounts for his awkward gait when first mounted. If a horse is well made, equilibrium comes to him easily when mounted, and his muscles strengthen in the proper proportion, providing that he is properly ridden. If, however, he has not been kindly treated by nature, we must, as far as she will allow it, help him to lighten his forehand at the trot and canter

by a judicious raising and placing of his head and neck. Let us endeavor to find out how this may be done without depriving the animal of liberty of action.

If first the fore and then the hind limbs of a horse are placed on a sensitive weighing-machine, it will be found that the forehand is heavier than the hind-quarters; *should the animal hold his neck horizontal so that the head is vertical the excess is increased* according to the length of the neck and the size of the head Exhaustive weighing experiments, carried out in England and on the Continent, prove that from 14 to 28 lbs. weight is taken off the fore-legs by raising the head from the vertical position to a higher one, at which the front of the face makes an angle of 45 degrees with the ground. The head of the horse alone weighs from 40 to 50 lbs.

Other interesting points to be gleaned from horse-weighing experiments are that about 66% of the rider's weight is carried on the forelegs if he sits upright, and that if the forehand is weighed with the man leaning well forward and then leaning well back, there will be a difference of weight of

approximately 50 lbs. on the forelegs. Readers who are skeptical of the value of the "distribution of the rider's weight" as an aid will do well to bear this fact in mind.

Veterinary science supplies us with certain information concerning the mechanism of the horse which every trainer ought to be in possession of if he is to get full value out of his work. Without entering into technical detail, the chief muscle which advances the foreleg runs from the top of the head to the bone below the blade-bone. Its origin is from the back of the head and the first four bones of the neck (see Fig. 9, the point of attachment to the blade-bone or humerus is marked with a cross). If we artificially shorten this muscle by pronounced flexion of the neck we interfere with free shoulder-action, reduce the horse's speed, and cause him to resort to increased knee-action to raise his forelegs. Veterinary experts also tell us that the joint between the head and the first bone of the neck is not constructed for a facial angle approaching the perpendicular; that the bones of the neck are not suitably arranged for continuous curvature; and that the tissues of the throat are displaced if the nose is

tucked in, when the gland may be seen bulging out behind the edge of the jaw. A horse that makes no noise in a snaffle may roar in a bit, though the noise may not be due to paralysis.

A horse never voluntarily arches his neck to any

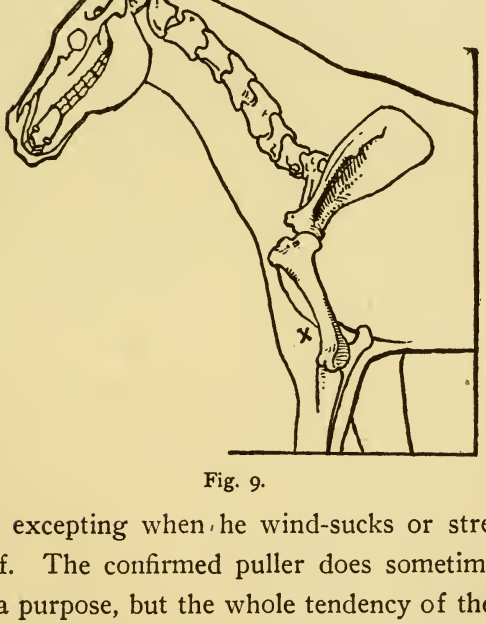

Fig. 9.

degree excepting when he wind-sucks or stretches himself. The confirmed puller does sometimes do it for a purpose, but the whole tendency of the free horse is to extend his head, and most of us have watched with admiration the light elastic movement of the young horse surprised when grazing in a

field, and the high carriage of his head as he trots away. The animal certainly has no weight on his back, but we may note that the free shoulder-action we admire accompanies a neck held high and a head if anything extended.

Perhaps the best illustration of the part played in advancing the forelegs, by the important muscle I have mentioned, is to be observed in the different effect on the action of the horse of the "over-draw check-rein" (Plate XIX) used in trotting matches, and the English bearing-rein. The first named is designed to bring the head up and the nose out, thus stretching the neck-muscle to its extreme length and giving the quickest and freest shoulder action, which results in increased speed for trotting matches. The English bearing-rein (Plate XX), on the contrary, arches the horse's neck and brings his nose in, which produces exaggerated knee-action and loss of forward movement, but allows the driver a fuller power of control.

For pleasant hacks, such as the gaited horses of Kentucky, and for the English park hack, the arched-neck, nose-in profile recommended by Baucher and other Haute Ecole enthusiasts in no way detracts from their usefulness, and they are

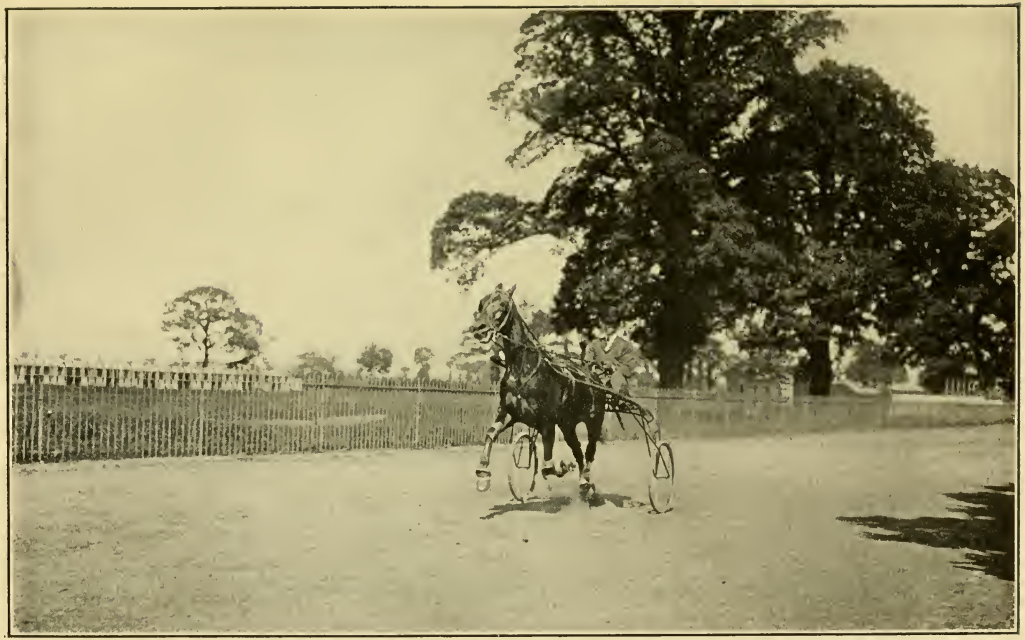

Plate XIX.—American Overdrawn Check Rein (Increased Shoulder Action)
W. A. Rouch, 161 Strand

Plate XX.—English Bearing Rein (Increased Knee Action)
W. A. Rouch, 161 Strand

comfortable to ride, but "hacks" pure and simple are rare in England now; most saddle-horses are bred to be either racers, hunters, or polo ponies. It is probably for this reason that we Britishers have not generally adopted the methods of Baucher and his disciples. The hunting man, for instance, must have a horse trained to use his shoulders with complete freedom, or he will not get the best pace out of his mount when he requires it, and will probably come to grief when jumping a fence with a ditch on the landing side.

Doubtless the arched-neck, nose-in system of trainings, places the horse in the most advantageous position for control and with his hocks more under him, perhaps because, the arching being unnatural, he endeavors to escape from it by throwing his weight back. But leaving the hack out of the question, do these advantages compensate for the loss of that freedom which is so essential in the field? We can always get a horse back on his hocks when occasion arises without this iron-bound system. The other extreme, the position the racing trotter is made to assume, with his nose poked out and up in the air, is equally unsuitable for general purposes, as the bit does not rest on the bars of the mouth.

The medium course seems the most natural one to pursue, that is to say, to train the horse to carry his neck as high from the withers as is compatible with control, and to demand no pronounced flexion at the poll. I have obtained happy results from this procedure: once a horse learns to go light in front at a trot and canter with no hold on his mouth he will balance himself correctly without any excessive "collecting," and the rider's power of control is all-sufficient.

The Arabs provide us with good examples of the two extremes. The true desert Arabs of Syria, who generally ride their mares, control them with a chain round the nose instead of a bit, and they move with as high a carriage of the head as a horse at liberty, whilst the agricultural population and townsmen use a bit of the severest pattern, and their horses carry their heads with the nose very much tucked in.

I have not touched on the carriage of the head from the point of view of vision, as although Hayes insists that when the nose is brought in the vision is limited, Major-General F. Smith, Director of Veterinary Service, whom I have to thank for much valuable technical information, is not in agreement

with him. The horse's eye is prominently set at the side of the face, and not in front as in ourselves; it has great rotatory powers, and the facial bones below it are narrowed, all of which enables the horse to see with facility in almost any position.

A naturally well-balanced horse always wins the Derby, and there is no more trying course. By leaving the animal heavy in front at a trot and canter we sacrifice the possibility of making him a sure and comfortable ride, we contribute to the early breakdown of his forelegs, and, most important of all, he will take it out of himself more quickly and so tire his rider and rob him of his sport; or, if in war, perhaps of his life. After an ill-made horse has been balanced he can always extend his neck to get his weight forward and so increase his powers of propulsion.

Nothing makes him put his weight on his forehand more surely than being ridden by a man who constantly leans on the reins,—a practice which eventually leads, so to speak, to the horse pulling with his forelegs.

General Sir Robert Baden Powell, in an article on balance in the *Cavalry Journal* of July, 1906, gives a practical example of its value for the long

distance journeys that so often fall to the lot of the cavalry horse, as demonstrated in the long-distance riding competitions on the Continent. Lieutenant Allut, 28th (French) Dragoons, who won the competition in 1904, said that in selecting the horse from his squadron he went not so much by its history as by its balance: when he found a well-built horse which was light in the forehand he knew that he had one which would not easily tire and go lame from carrying all the weight on its forelegs.

As the General explains, "in training a horse we should not only aim at teaching him to hold himself in the correct position at the different paces and movements, but also at developing the necessary muscles for keeping him permanently so placed or balanced." I shall have more to say on the way in which this can be done later on.

So much for the foundation of the training necessary for every description of riding horse. When he has been made to undergo it we can proceed to specialize for the particular work which we require the animal to perform; be it hunting, polo, show jumping, or mounted combat; and it will repay us well if his mind has been developed as well as his muscle.

XVIII

THE HORSE'S MIND

XVIII

THE HORSE'S MIND

"Therefore cultivate his intellect—I use the word advisedly—even before you enter on the development of his physical powers."

WHYTE MELVILLE.

IT would be out of place here to discuss the comparative intellectual capacity of our domesticated animals, or to try to explain, as scientists do, that in the struggle for existence some races of wild animals develop higher mental powers than others, either in pursuit of their prey or in evading the attacks of their enemies. Before, however, condemning our horses as less intelligent than our dogs, we should remember that the former spend many hours out of the twenty-four tied up in front of a wall, a state of affairs which is not conducive to the development of the brain.

Horses are not bred for brains, and authorities are not in agreement as to the extent to which they possess them, some even going so far as to say that any attempt at mental development may add to the

trainer's troubles. Literature on the subject is somewhat uncommon, though most authors touch upon it. Quite recently, however, Count Eugenio Martinengo Cesaresco has written a volume insisting on mind-development for horses if we wish to get full value out of the machine, and he has lately written to me to say that the eminent authority Professor Hobday approves of his psychology.

In his book, the author takes a low view of the horse's mental capacity; he writes:—"We have learnt the reason why the thunder is caused by lightning, but the horse cannot attain this. He stops at mere association . . . . . and erroneously thinks that two things, however associated, one is the cause of the other (sic) although it is not." The caliber of the horse's mind, he says, must be carefully taken into account in administering both punishments and favors, and he quotes the following ancient fable as an instance of wrong association of a favor. A dog bit a man, and the man gave him bread in the hope that the dog would bite him no more. The result was that the dog went about biting people when he was hungry, because he had obtained bread by that means before. As an example of wrong asso-

ciation of punishment the Count tells us of a rider whose horse stopped "because he ill-treated him in the mouth with his hands." When the horse stood still he did not punish him, but did so when the horse moved on again. The animal was thereby taught that "to stand still was good and to go on was bad."

The author insists on the training of the mind and body together, which is only possible with individual attention, and points out the danger of hurry; vicious horses are made, he says, by being asked to do certain things without preparatory instruction of a gradual nature; and he adds that many horses merely from seeing that they have once been able to have their own way become "intractable and no longer liable to control." Develop the mental qualities of the horse, he says, and he will become more obedient; he agrees with the ancients, who considered a good brain to be a valuable asset in a horse. Hayes takes the opposite view. In his book, "Points of a Horse," he disapproves of the development of a high degree of mental (*i. e.*, reasoning) power in a horse, saying that it makes him impatient of control by man. His arguments are not convincing, and might equally well be applied to retrievers. In a

previous work, "Illustrated Horse Breaking," he states that he has not been able to trace any indication of reasoning power in a horse, by which he shows that he was not very clear in his own mind on the subject.

Mr. E. T. Brewster has told us, in an interesting article in McClure's Magazine on the "Animal Mind From Inside," that the reason why the horse is so generally useful is far from complimentary to that noble animal. This is what he says. "He (the horse) possesses just the right degree of stupidity. If he were stupider he would be less plastic to acquire convenient habits. If he were cleverer he would acquire too many habits for himslf, and live too much his own life, like that particularly clever animal, the cat. The brightest children, likewise, are sometimes the hardest to bring up." There is no doubt that the brightest horses are the hardest to train, but like the bright children they give the best results if trouble is taken with their education.

I myself humbly agree with Cesaresco, Whyte Melville, and others on the subject. Now, the best way to make use of the horse's brain is to teach him to understand the voice, and though Hayes and

Galvayne advocate this to the extent of using a few simple words, such as "whoa," "come up," and "back," many other writers, including Cesaresco, consider it to be impossible. This statement every soldier will question: he knows how quickly horses learn words of command and trumpet calls. In India some years ago, so the story goes, a charger was winning a race, but when nearing the winning-post "Halt" was sounded on the trumpet, and he shut up. The astute owner of the second favorite had commissioned a trumpeter to be in readiness, and the ruse succeeded perfectly.

I will quote two examples of voice training resulting in marked brain development which have recently come under my personal observation, and which should go far towards removing doubts on the subject. There was a horse at Woolwich in 1909 called Tommy, and belonging to Captain Aherne, R.H.A., which if turned loose would walk, trot, canter, jump, and change legs at a canter when told to do so, without the aid of whip or signal, besides coming to his master when called. This was taught by means of long reins[1] accompanied by

[1] The horse was bought as a five-year-old and had undergone no early training.

word of command, the reins being dispensed with as soon as the animal had learnt to associate the word with the movement. Every order was given in the same level tone of voice, which goes to disprove Fillis's theory that a horse cannot understand the words of an order, but only the tone in which it is spoken. There was no picking and choosing about this horse's parents.

Another instance was that of a mare called Trixie,[2] who performed at the Palace Theater in London during the winters of 1906-7-8, and perhaps furnished an example of the highest point of mental development ever reached by a member of the equine race. She could spell, add, subtract, multiply, and divide, work a cash register, and pick out colored rags at the call of the audience from a variegated heap on the stage. Mr. Barnes, her owner and trainer, is interesting on the subject of her education, and is a firm believer in the intelligence of the horse. His mare, who was three parts Arab, was bred for brains, her dam, sire and grand-dam having been famous trick performers. From the time

[2] Trixie was killed in a railway accident in America (February 1909).

Trixie was a filly of three weeks old she was allowed to run in and out of her master's house in America like a dog, and was the constant companion and playmate of his children; in fact, her early life ran along the same pleasant lines as that of her Arab ancestors. She was twelve years old in 1907, and had not completed her education until two years previously.

Mr. Barnes first conceived the idea of teaching her to spell from his children. They had four alphabet letters printed on large blocks, and the filly learned to pick up whichever was called for. Inspired by the Kindergarten system, after ceaseless effort and unwearying patience Mr. Barnes taught her to spell almost any word by syllables, showing that she really associated the sound of the word with the letters that form it. This was proved by her occasional lapses into very phonetic or Rooseveltian spelling.

She then learnt the result of every simple combination of multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction up to the numeral nine. Space does not admit of going fully into Mr. Barnes's method of instruction in arithmetic, but he gave me to understand that it was briefly as follows. He would call

out to the mare, "3 minus 1, *Two*," with emphasis on the last word, and would discontinue saying "two" when Trixie had learnt to pick up that numeral every time he said "3 minus 1." Eventually she committed all the combinations to memory.

Teaching the mare to distinguish colors Mr. Barnes found easier than the foregoing. As soon as the initial difficulty of fixing her attention and of making her "take notice" at all was overcome, he placed two colored rags on the ground, and taught the mare by voice, at first accompanied by sign, to pick out the one called for, rewarding or punishing her for success or failure. The number of colors was afterwards increased, and Trixie learnt to indicate the shade of a tie or of a lady's hat.

Count Martinengo Cesaresco admits that a horse can be taught to distinguish between red and white, but his method of instruction is rather drastic. He dresses one man in red and another in white, makes the red man beat the horse and the white man caress him, and naïvely adds that the horse soon distinguishes the difference in color.

Mr. Barnes claimed for Trixie the brain of a child of six with all its limitations. She frequently

required admonition to keep her to business, and had learnt to remember that a deep sigh from her master at her stupidity was the calm before the storm. He never fed the mare himself, and unless he drove her, which he did through London traffic without reins, she was exercised by his groom, of whom she had no opinion whatever, as he was not allowed to correct her.

A committee of experts met in 1907 with the object of establishing or disposing of the mare's claim to responsive intelligence, her detractors asserting that her feats were performed by means of a trick. She had just recovered from a severe attack of pneumonia, and after tests lasting over an hour and a half she showed such fatigue that the committee released her, and endeavored to come to a decision. Though a majority was in favor of crediting the mare with responsive intelligence, no understanding could be arrived at, as the remaining members of the committee were strongly adverse to their decision, and the inquiry was adjourned for further examination.

I believe in the genuineness of the mare's attainments; if the show had been trick-work on the part

of the owner, it would perhaps have been more wonderful, but would hardly have stood the test of so many performances. Somebody was invariably on the stage with the avowed intention of detecting Mr. Barnes's methods, and no one appears to have done so.

No ordinary man would wish to teach his horse multiplication even if he felt able to do so, but for obvious reasons a horse is more useful and a safer conveyance if he is obedient to the voice. Trixie's wonderful brain development must in great measure be attributed to her early life and surroundings.

There are many other examples of cleverness in horses, and General Tweedie, in his book "The Arab and his Horse," tells us that the traveler between Bagdad and the Caspian used to strap his portmanteau across the back of a galloping post-horse, which immediately started off alone for the next station, and delivered the baggage safely. According to Hayes, Rockefeller and Sample used to drive horses without reins, and had them under perfect control.

Thormanby and many other writers quote cases of which they had personal knowledge; in fact, there

is ample evidence not only to show that the horse's mind can be developed if time and trouble are taken in the process, but that the results fully justify the labor expended. Osmer would have us believe that the excellence of horses is altogether mechanical and not in the blood; others believe in blood only; but surely brains must and do count.

There is another reason why the mind-training of horses should be taken up and encouraged, and that is for the good of future generations; the process must necessarily be slow, but if carried out systematically " stupid " horses should not be so common in the future. I must repeat that Trixie's was an exceptional case: she was the product of three generations of the higher education.

XIX

APPLIANCES FOR HORSE-TRAINING

XIX

APPLIANCES FOR HORSE-TRAINING

"That which is new is only that which has been forgotten."
Translated from the Russian.

THE British Board of Agriculture as at present constituted only came into existence in the year 1889. It might with advantage have collected information on the subject of horse-training for distribution amongst breeders and farmers, but no official reports have dealt with the subject as far as I am aware. This is unfortunate, as scientific knowledge in this branch would be of the greatest use to the agricultural population; it would lower the percentage of horses that either break down under training or become intractable from improper treatment, and it would increase the value of those that find purchasers.

A study of equine literature reveals our happy-go-lucky ways in this important matter, in particular

as to appliances for aiding the horse-trainer in his work, several of which were well known in past times, and after falling into disuse were reintroduced several times over as being quite new, and often of the author's own invention.

To simplify description I will classify them under two heads, namely, appliances used on foot, and those used mounted and dismounted. The former include long reins, the cavesson and leading-rein, crosstrees, the crupper leading-rein, the Commanche bridle, side reins, the strait-jacket, the Galvayne strap, pillars single and double, the Rarey strap, throwing gear, the crush, the cage, the iron-pointed pole, the plain pole and the longeing whip. After reading some of the above names it will hardly surprise the reader to be told that early writers not infrequently alluded to appliances as "engines," or "utensils!"

In the second category are the rope gag, the Austrian nose-band, the bearing-rein, the running rein, the martingale standing and running, the cane, two hand-whips (to be used simultaneously), the hand-spur, the mouthing, and various other bits forming part of the bridle, and the saddle.

Long Reins.—"Long-rein driving," or, in other words, driving a colt on a circle or in a straight line with a pair of reins or ropes, has been forgotten and brought in as a new art several times. An Australian named Galvayne claims that he introduced the correct and scientific way of using the long reins into England in the 'eighties, and he certainly was an artist: I have seen him at work. Hayes, who was lecturing in this country on horse-training at about the same period, states that he learnt their use in Ireland from a Mr. John Hubert Moore, and that this gentleman derived his knowledge from an old Irish breaker named Fallon, who was born in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Hayes also seems to infer that the practice was unknown in England until he himself introduced it. As a matter of fact an English gentleman named Mr. Browne used long reins in the sixteenth century, and in 1624 wrote a book entitled "Browne, his Fifty Years' Practice, or an Exact Discourse Concerning Snaffle-riding, etc.," giving the way of carrying out long-rein driving. His methods must have been practically those of the present day, as he is careful to explain: "Now when you have him perfect on either

hand and he doth set his trot comely and stately, you may venture to set a saddle on him."

Lord Pembroke, Sir Sidney Medows, Freeman, and Adams, all practised long-rein driving in various ways, and wrote about it in the latter part of the eighteenth and early in the nineteenth centuries, yet Galvayne and Hayes were both able to tour the country and make a financial success of exhibiting the practice as new in the latter half of the nineteenth.

About twenty years after Hayes's demonstrations of long-rein driving on his horse-breaking tours, his methods were embodied in the English Cavalry Training Manual. The appliance is now in general use at Netheravon; at the Woolwich Riding Establishment it is employed for horses which cannot be backed or are refractory, and sometimes for teaching jumping, but every riding instructor is taught how to handle the reins. I understand that the Messrs. Miller have very generally discarded them.

According to Berenger this appliance was well-known on the Continent at a much earlier period than the eighteenth century, but it is not used abroad now, nor has it been for some considerable time.

As foreigners look upon horse-training as more

of a science than we generally do in this country, their abandonment of long-rein driving must carry weight in assessing the value of the appliance.

The advantages that it offers for training are that the horse is under perfect control from the first; he can be exercised and disciplined when in poor condition, he can be taught to go true on either foreleg at a canter, and to jump. Long reins afford a good means of gentling horses that have had no previous handling, and of dealing with refractory animals. The disadvantages which apparently led to the practice being abandoned for some time are that the trainer acts on a foreign fulcrum, which gives him immense power and is likely to result in hard mouths. The reins are heavy,[1] so that mechanical means must generally be resorted to in order to keep the animal's head in the correct position. Passing the reins through supports, or even through the stirrups, certainly lightens the weight on the horse's mouth, but this is not sufficient to prevent the head in many cases from being carried too low, with the nose too much tucked in. It is obviously better not to

[1] Leather long reins weigh 4 lbs., webbing ones 2½, and rope is unsuitable for the purpose as it is liable to gall a horse, especially if he breaks away.

constrain the movements of the colt's head and neck any more than is absolutely necessary in the initial stages, even if his conformation is hopelessly bad, and it is also obvious that if he is allowed to hang his head in the commencement of his training, the rider will have more trouble afterwards in getting him correctly placed and balanced. Bearing-reins were found necessary in the past, and Hayes advocates the use of the overhead bearing-rein attached to the nose-band. This does not, however, lighten the weight on the mouth. Put a harness horse into the lead of a coach for the first time, and you will find that the weight of the reins, although supported, makes him chary of facing the bit.

To handle long reins successfully is by no means easy, and requires a man of much practice and experience. When I first saw them systematically used in horse-breaking, I was much taken with the idea, and have before now written in their praise; riper experience has led me to agree with Lord Pembroke, who says with reference to working on foot: "A good rider, who feels every motion of his horse, must act with more precision, delicacy, and exactness." If a horse has been properly dealt with be-

fore the time of training arrives, the sooner he is backed the quicker he will be trained; the mouth is better made and the horse more quickly balanced without resorting to long reins; and this is the general practice on the Continent.

When they are used, the horse should be made to circle round the trainer, the outer rein being held sufficiently tight to keep the animal's quarters from flying out. Both reins should be supported on the horse's back about trace-high, and the first time they are put on a young one they should be attached to a light cavesson.

Hayes suggests using long reins for teaching riding, in order to relieve the tyro of the control of his horse. It is an old idea which was practised in the sixteenth century, and carries no advantages over the longeing rein in common use abroad.

The Single Rein and Cavesson.—The single rein needs very little description. It is simply a long rein made either of leather, webbing, or cord, with a billet at one end. The cavesson is a head-collar with an iron or steel nose-band covered with leather or cloth, or a plain leather one, on the front of which there may be either one or three rings, to which the

long rein can be attached. The metal nose-band was introduced to facilitate control of the horse by jerking the rein and hurting the bridge of his nose. Although it can doubtless be used by an experienced man without giving unnecessary pain, it is a very severe instrument. At Saumur I saw some sixty horses led into the school wearing cavessons. The reins were certainly only held by grooms, but nearly every horse flinched occasionally from touches with the iron nose-band, whilst they were simply being walked and trotted round. This brought out the severity of the appliance, as the nose-bands were covered with felt and fitted closely round the nose to make them as mild as possible.

The French use the single rein and cavesson with an iron nose-band for exercising on the longe and teaching jumping; they claim that its use is more than justified by the fact that the horse is under complete control without tampering with and perhaps spoiling his mouth. The Austrians have discarded it, and, when longeing is necessary, buckle the rein to a ring in the center of a short connecting-strap fastened to the rings of the snaffle. In conjunction with this, side reins attached to the D's on the saddle

are invariably used, and a noseband fastened below the bit if required. When the longe is employed for teaching the beginner to ride, the nose-band is discarded.

Some writers recommend longeing the horse with the rein attached to one side of the bridle only. There can be no question that the practice is wrong; it at once teaches the animal to lean against one side of the bit and spoils his mouth. Xenophon laid down that the young horse should never be led with the hand on one side of the bridle only for the same reason, and it naturally follows that one-sided longeing is even worse.

The cavesson is certainly of great use for very young horses, as they are weak, and therefore easy of control. A thick leather nose-band will then answer the purpose; it offers the best means of leading a young horse about, which is the simplest act of obedience we can ask of him. It can be used for schooling a horse over fences, either just as it is or with the addition of long reins.

Enthusiasts for two reins say that a horse will never go correctly on a circle on one only, because the head is pulled in and the quarters driven out-

wards by the whip; this state of affairs is, however, only arrived at if the horse circles unwillingly and the whip is used from the center of the circle. The young horse should never be circled at a trot until he moves pleasantly at a walk, nor should the canter be attempted before he goes well on both hands at a trot; he will learn the game quickly enough.

Crosstrees are another very old invention, and are designed for the purpose of securing bearing-reins and side reins at various heights in dismounted work. Old-fashioned country trainers, amongst others, are in the habit of leading colts about with bearing-reins attached to this appliance; but as there is no give and take in the reins the animal eventually learns to lean on the bit, and his mouth is liable to be spolied before he is backed. Rubber reins have been tried to minimize this evil, but authorities are not in agreement as to their efficacy. Cesaresco and Hayes are amongst those who contend that rubber reins have a diametrically opposite action to that of good hands. Let us leave it at this: that a bearing-rein, however made or fixed, can in no way imitate the salutary "feeling" of a good pair of hands; and let us again repeat, with reference to bearing-

reins and side reins, that the less the head is forcibly controlled at this early stage the better. Crosstrees are only used abroad for Haute Ecole training.

In the event of the horse refusing to lead, two appliances are suggested—the CRUPPER LEADING-REIN and the COMMANCHE BRIDLE.

The crupper leading-rein can be improvised by making a small loop in the center of a long piece of rope, which is applied as a crupper, and passing the two ends through the stirrup-leathers and on through the headstall just above the nose-band. It will sometimes be found useful in leading a horse over small water jumps when other means of getting him over have failed, for moving an obstinate jibber, or for boxing a refractory horse.

A description of the Commanche bridle will be found in Hayes's "Illustrated Horse Breaking"; its action gives pain, so that the advantage it offers is problematical.

Several writers, both English and foreign, have invented "STRAIT-JACKETS" for horses. The principle is the same in each case: the horse's legs are encircled with a rope at about elbow height, in order to facilitate handling. The appliance was in use in

the sixteenth century, but was introduced as new by M. Raabe (amongst others) compartively recently. It should never be needed in a country like England, where horses are bred in domesticity.

The next appliance we come to is the GALVAYNE STRAP, to connect the head-collar to the horse's tail. A piece of rope will generally answer the purpose. When a horse is tied in this manner he can only move in a circle and soon tires, which makes subjugation simple. Jennings, writing in 1866, mentions this as a common practice; both Galvayne and Sample are credited with introducing it into England, but the idea was not original. Tying the tail-hairs to the bridle was written about in the sixteenth century, and doubtless practised long before that date. It teaches the horse nothing, and its effect is only temporary; as previously mentioned, the long reins are useful for gentling when necessary, and if a horse cannot be disciplined without them he had better be sold.

Modern authors do not advocate the use of "PILLARS," another appliance consisting of two posts a short distance apart, between which the horse is placed and attached by the reins. They

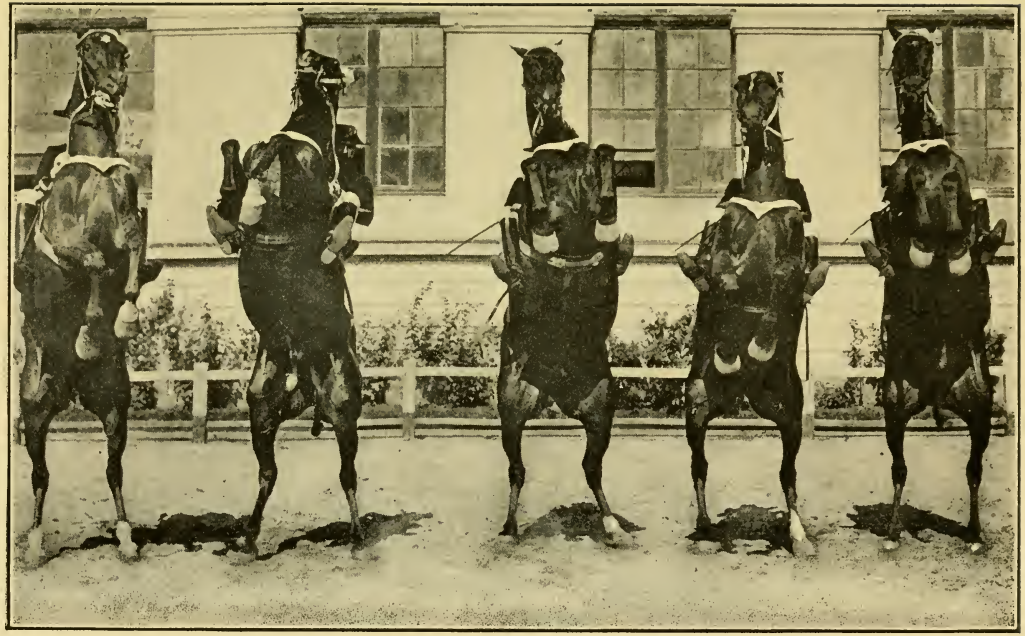

Plate XXI.—The "Courbette"

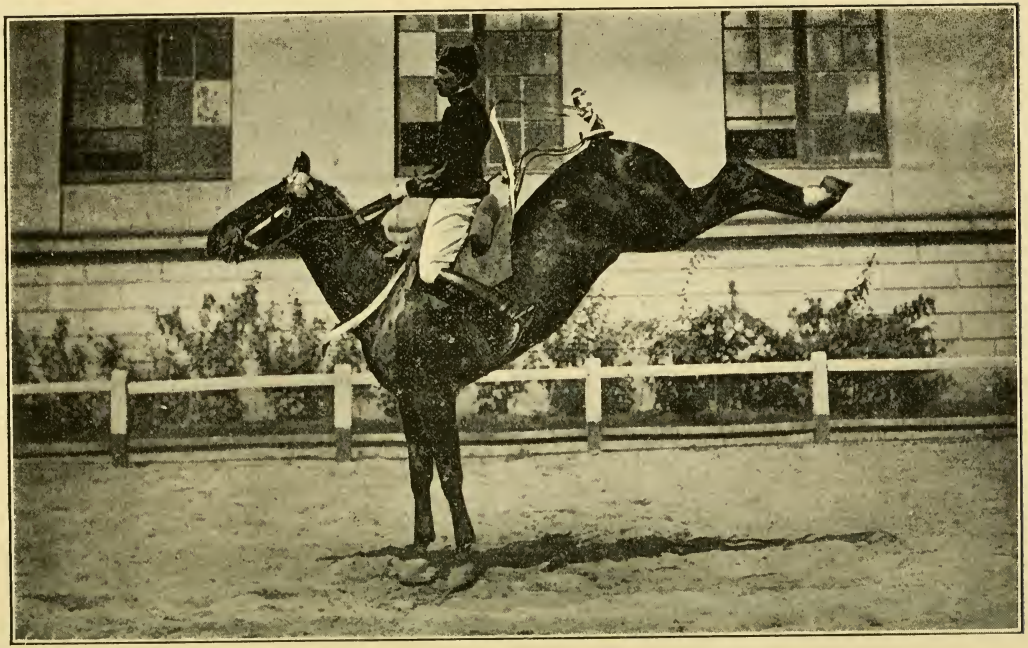

Plate XXII.—The "Croupade"

have been a great deal used in the past, not only for Haute Ecole work, but for getting the horse's hocks under him by driving him up to the bit with a whip. They are used in France now to train "Sauteurs," and in France and Austria to train Haute Ecole horses in exercises such as the "courbette" (Plate XXI) and the "croupade" (Plate XXII). The originator of the idea seems to have been Eumenes, who when besieged at the fort of Nora by Antigonus, bridled his horses in the stable and attached the reins to pulleys in the roof, and requisitioned people to lash them with whips from behind. He thus gave them exercise, and taught them to what Berenger calls "yerk" out behind, the consequence being that when the siege was raised his horses were in condition and fit for service in the field.

A Neapolitan named Pignatelli is credited with the invention of pillars. He was the most famous horseman of his time, and published a work called "Ludus Equestris" in 1520. Two pupils of Pignatelli's named Broue and Pluvinel first introduced the pillars into France, and until the time of Bourgelat (1750) they appear to have been in general

use abroad. Bourgelat, whose prestige and influence carried great weight in the horse world, would have none of them, asserting that the rider's legs were the best pillars.

The Single Pillar, much favored by the first Duke of Newcastle, was employed for the same purposes as the double pillars, but according to history it was never popular, as it only served to fatigue and harass the horse. In Australia they tie the freshly-caught horse to a tree with tackle he cannot break, as his first lesson in submission, and the single pillar was used for a like end. In America it is well named the "snubbing post."

The Rarey Strap.—Rarey, a farmer from Ohio, came to England in 1856 to give practical demonstrations of his new method of taming and training horses. Subscribers anxious to know his secret and to be shown his appliances presented him with over £15,000. He had come to tell them how to strap a horse's leg up and throw him. The secretary of the first subscription list naïvely remarked that Rarey had reinvented what was known some fifty years before, and he might have added, some hundreds of years ago. Amongst others, Mr. Browne

(1624) gives a drawing of a horse with his leg tied up for the purpose of subjugation, and Hayes tells us that Rarey's methods are clearly shown in the collection of Graeco-Scythic art in St. Petersburg. Shortly before Rarey's arrival in England one Frank Holding appears to have practised something of the same sort. No special straps are necessary for tying up a horse's foreleg; it can be done with a stirrup-leather. The result of doing so is that in time the horse gets tired out from standing on three legs, and horse trainers should bear this in mind, not for general use, but to deal with exceptional cases. Captain Morley Knight (author of "Hints on Driving") gives it as a cure for jibbing in harness.

There are several different kinds of THROWING GEAR, but most horses can be taught to lie down in the following manner:—

Strap up the near fore with a stirrup leather, taking care that the buckle is on the inside, and that the foot, when held up, is outside the horse's fore-arm. Take a long leather strap with a loop at the end, and tie it round the off fore-pastern. Stand on the near side of the horse, holding the end of the

strap in the hand, and tap the horse gently on the off fore just below the knee. Then pull at the strap, saying "Down!" at the same time: the horse will soon learn to go down on his knees and lie down as he does in the stable.

To throw a horse without any special appliance, act as follows:—

Strap up the near fore as before. Standing on the near side, take up both reins in the left hand, the right rein shorter so as to bend the horse's head to the right; place the left hand on the withers and catch hold of the back part of the saddle with the right; then with both hands put a little weight on to the horse and pull slightly backwards: he will go down, but not always without a struggle, and as often as not his hind-quarters will touch ground first. This method, which is given in the Cavalry Manual 1907, is best kept for a punishment.

Between the stockyards in Australia there is often a narrow, high-railed passage; when the horse enters it the doors are let down in front of and behind him, and he can be head-collared and handled at will. This contrivance is called a CRUSH,

and is extremely useful in dealing with untamed animals.

Sample patented a revolving box or CAGE, to subdue wild horses in; it was not a success.

The IRON-POINTED POLE and the HAND-SPUR were employed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to teach horses the "courbette" and "croupade," and a plain ash-pole has frequently been in use with which to stroke down a horse that was too wild to approach. Galvayne calls it a "third hand."

The LONGEING WHIP, which should be made light enough for one-handed work, should generally be carried when long-rein driving, but the less it is used the better. Riding masters in the old days, when instructing a ride of recruits, were fond of using the "chambrière," as it is called in the school, and did a great deal of harm with it. It frightened the pupil when his horse was hit, and it alarmed the horses in the ride so much that many would not leave the side of the school for fear of it.

The ROPE GAG or TWITCH is an old invention, and can either be made of a halter or with a piece of rope. The gag can be applied under the upper

lip or in the mouth. It has the great advantage over the ordinary twitch that pain need only be inflicted on the animal at the necessary moment; with the ordinary twitch it is of course constant. The appliance may sometimes be useful for disciplinary purposes when other measures have failed.

The Austrian Nose-band, or Wischzaum, which is attached below the bit, and is supposed to have been brought out by von Oeynhausen, author of several works on equine matters, is in constant use in Austrian and German training schools. It is undoubtedly the best form of nose-band for training purposes when the employment of any is indicated. Any sort of fixed nose-band, if tight, carries with it the following disadvantage, which is clearly brought out by Cesaresco, namely, that it impedes the movement of the lower jaw and thus partially stops the flow of saliva. Salivation is like oil to machinery, and prevents the mouth from becoming irritated. The nose-band certainly increases the power of the hands.

The Bearing-rein, either over-head or ordinary, can be attached to the saddle for mounted work: its disadvantages have already been dealt with.

The RUNNING-REIN was another appliance much favored in the latter part of the eighteenth and the commencement of the nineteenth centuries, Tyndale (1797) assuring us that it was an excellent contrivance for raising and placing a horse's head when he carried it too low, whereas Skeene (1807) advised it for the exact opposite. We learn from mechanics that, putting friction aside, the running-rein doubles the power of the rider's hands, and however useful on occasion this may be on a made horse, the principle is fundamentally wrong for the making of his mouth. It should be the trainer's aim gradually to make the colt respond to the slightest touch of the reins, and not to haul at an improvised system of pulley.

MARTINGALES are of two sorts, running and standing; opinions are more divided on the value of this appliance than on that of any other. Some fine cross-country riders will seldom be without a standing martingale on practically every horse, and amongst these may be mentioned Colonel Rivers Bulkeley, the late Empress of Austria's hunting pilot. We may take it as an axiom that some horses are so constructed about the head and neck

that in spite of any amount of training, absolute control and perfect guidance can only be assured by the use of the martingale, and that the running one, when properly fitted, interferes in no way with the horse's ordinary movements and is therefore harmless. When, however, it comes to tying the animal's head down so that he cannot freely use it for balance, and then asking him to move on anything but level ground, we are, theoretically at any rate, working him under disadvantageous conditions.

The advantages of the CANE over the whip have been dealt with in the section on the whip; and the HAND-SPUR has been mentioned earlier in this one.

TWO HAND-WHIPS have been used by one man in working horses on foot and mounted, and the idea has been reintroduced by several authors. The first Duke of Newcastle used them in conjunction with the single pillar for teaching Haute Ecole riding, and in the sixteenth century they were held one in each hand for mounted training work. Hayes reintroduced them for this purpose. I can see no object in using them for either purpose.

I wish as much as possible to avoid going over

old ground, and do not therefore intend to enter fully into the big subject of Bits, which Dwyer has treated scientifically in his work "Seats and Saddles," should the reader care to turn to it. Faulty methods of training must to a great extent be held responsible for the many bits now on sale, but compared with those of one hundred years ago they are, generally speaking, mild. Doubtless we must thank hunting for this. Excepting for flat-racing, and for hunting in most parts of Ireland, we may take it that the ordinary double bridle is serviceable enough, and, as Head has it, the smoother the bit the more willingly will the animal submit to it. A thick leather strap may often with advantage be substituted for the curb-chain. A good rider on a well-balanced horse will probably require no special bit, unless the animal has acquired the habit of getting his tongue over it, but the common gag is a most useful bit for re-training a "spoilt" horse who carries his head too low. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was advocated for the purpose of raising all young horses' heads, apparently whether they needed it or not.

In 1832 Don Juan Segundo issued a pamphlet on

bits, and in it asserted that a great many horses were set aside in our Cavalry as having lost all feeling in their mouths. That they were unfit for use he put down entirely to the imperfection of the regulation bit. Colonel Taylor, who then commanded the Cavalry Riding Establishment at Canterbury, agreed with Segundo, and recommended the following issue of 105 bits per squadron of 100 horses:—

5 for very hard mouths;
45 for hard mouths;
25 for good mouths;
8 for very tender mouths;
12 for star-gazers;
10 for borers.

No more severe indictment could have been framed on the horsemanship and training of the day, but we must not forget that the straight-legged seat was then the rule, and that more often than not the horse had to balance the rider at the expense of his own balance. I must again repeat that the conditions were altogether different from those obtaining on the Plains of America, where riding

in this fashion was usually a habit acquired in early youth.

And here let me beg the reader not to bind himself to the iron rule that a horse should do everything perfectly on a snaffle before ever a double bridle is put into his mouth. When once he understands the meaning of the bridle the rider must use his discretion; the ill-balanced horse will often "make" more quickly in a double bit and finish with a better mouth if it is used judiciously.

It has not been altogether pleasant to write about appliances, as it has been necessary to speak lightly of many which have been used successfully by masters of the equine world. These men often had to deal with wild and almost untamable animals, such as we fortunately meet with but rarely now, at any rate in England.

If the horse has been properly handled at first, and comes into a trainer's hands who is a good horseman and knows his work, all the appliances he is likely to use are a saddle, a snaffle, a double bridle, a cane stick, and possibly spurs.

XX

EARLY DAYS

XX

EARLY DAYS

"Horses are taught not by harshness but by gentleness."
XENOPHON.

"The grand thing is to get rid of dogged sulks and coltishness—of that wayward, swerving, hesitating gait, which says, 'Here's my foot, and there's my foot,' or 'There is a lion in the street and I cannot go forth!'"
GREENWOOD.

FREQUENT handling from foalhood onwards is of the first importance. A horse is not conscious of his own powers until he gets the better of his trainer, and the best way to keep him ignorant of them is to teach him to obey when he is young and weak. The Arab has always led the way in this early education. His horse is brought up with his children and is spoken to as if he were a human being. Countries such as Norway, where the severity of the climate obliges the farmer to house his ponies during the winter, follow the Arab's lead to a certain extent, and much less difficulty is experienced when serious training commences; but up

to the beginning of the nineteenth century the remainder of Europe paid very little attention to the early handling of horses, and most people in England are still much behindhand in the matter. Doubtless the openness of the country, which admitted of the colt running practically wild, increased the difficulties in days gone by.

The evils resulting from the neglect of early handling in the past induced trainers to try to overcome them by cruelty to the horse. Starving, the twitch, bleeding, tying the tail down, putting shot into the ears, drugging, and sewing the ears together were amongst the tortures resorted to to obtain mastery. The Duke of Newcastle, though he did not advocate such practices, wrote that "the horse is such a cunning creature in his opposition to man that he should be ruled by fear."

Nolan, quoting from a work published in 1664, gives an example of how equine intelligence and friendship to man were treated three hundred years ago. A Neapolitan called Pietro, who possessed a pony that would lie down, kneel and perform other tricks at his bidding, was burnt with his pony after giving a performance at Arles, the people being

convinced that both man and animal were in league with the evil one. Early association should spell early friendship; and a young horse must be treated with the same care and gentleness as a child, always remembering that both must be subject to correction, and this policy towards him will allow of his mind being developed to the best advantage.

Time is a great consideration to the small English horsebreeder; but he does not labor under the same disadvantages as did his ancestors. Odd moments spent in the pleasant occupation of gentling the colt will save much anxiety and some loss from lameness and accidents, which often result from keeping "wild" colts on the farm. The Irishman is a long way ahead of the Englishman in this respect. It is at this stage that the single long rein and leather cavesson are invaluable. The young horse should be led about, and should be allowed, in Rarey's words, to "see, smell, and touch with the nose" anything that is strange to him. If this is carefully carried out he should never become that abomination to either the rider or the driver, a shyer. If the colt is really afraid of anything that he meets, and which is moving towards him, turn

his head away from it and look away from it yourself. The last point is most important; when the colt discovers that the object of his distrust does not hurt him and that his trainer takes no notice of it, he will soon learn to let it pass him, either when he is on the move or is standing still and facing it. Shyers are manufactured by being seized by the head and made to face objects which are strange to them.

With infinite patience the colt should be taught to stand still, to move forward, and to come to the trainer when called. He should learn to lift his legs in turn, so that the first visit to the blacksmith's shop will not come as a surprise. Hand feeding with sugar and other delicacies promotes early friendship, and what Cesaresco calls "caresses on the eyes and occiput" produce a soothing and magnetic effect.

Dodge gives us a delightful picture of the perfect methods of kindness obtaining at Governor Leland Stanford's farm at Palo Alto. Anybody ill-treating the horses was instantly dismissed; but the colts were early given a respect for authority, and were

Plate XXIII.—A Jumping Lane

not allowed to "fool" when they were being handled.

In his third year the youngster should be made to carry about a sack with a certain weight in it, and should be taught to take the bit, and, if intended for a hunter, to negotiate small jumps at liberty. A colt thus handled should give the trainer no trouble when he has to mount him, and he will not, as Mr. Browne wrote, "have to venture in God's name to put over his leg," as if he were undertaking something altogether too perilous.

Good large runs on undulating pasture and including a certain amount of rough ground are everything to the youngster, and teach him to use his hocks and shoulders. Animals reared in small flat paddocks, as are so many of our thoroughbreds, start their education at a disadvantage from the point of view of general utility.

At Elvaston Castle, jumping-lanes (Plate XXIII), with obstacles suited to the ages of the young ones, connect Lord Harrington's paddocks with the night sheds. When the colts are released in the morning they reach the paddocks by way of the jumping-lanes, and it is a pretty sight to see each

lot, according to age, bunch themselves together and go over their course. These young horses require very little schooling over fences when serious work commences.

XXI

FURTHER TRAINING

XXI

FURTHER TRAINING

". . . . . so is my horse;
It is a creature that I train to fight,
To wind, to stop, to run directly on,
His corporal motion governed by my spirit."
—SHAKESPEARE, *Julius Cæsar.*

MANY writers give us the time in years or months which the training of a horse occupies, some even stating the exact number of days required, varying from seventy-five to one. De Mauléon, in his "Méthode de Dressage," says that he has been able to break four horses in one day, to obey all the aids and go in harness. I feel personally unable to make any pronouncement on the subject, or even to recommend any particular course of lessons for a young horse; the length of time must vary according as the animal is well built, and therefore perfectly balanced, or the reverse. It must, however, be harmful to hurry any young horse's education. Other points to be weighed in

assessing the necessary time are the character of the trainer, the disposition of the horse, his age, and his fitness for the work in hand.

The personal element is the leading factor in horse training. One of the best trainers I ever saw, though he rode "well enough," was by no means a fine horseman. Yet he had "a way with him," and always seemed to follow the least line of resistance by instinct; he was friends with a difficult horse in a very short time and a "kind" one understood him at once.

There are many systems advocated for horse training, yet none of these holds the field, which I believe to be simply for the above reason, namely, that the personal factor is supreme, and that as long as the man has an intimate knowledge of horses and what they should do and and be when he has finished with them, he will train them as perfectly as circumstances permit on any system, modifying his procedure to suit individual cases.

English and American horses certainly have characters, and the better they are bred the more marked will these be. General Brocklehurst, master of the Cottesmore hounds, writes to me that the best com-

pliment he ever heard paid to English and Irish horses came from Mr. Blackman, the dealer in Knightsbridge (London), who remarked that he bought Continental carriage horses by preference, because when he got two animals alike in color, shape, and action he had a pair, whereas two perfectly matched English or Irish horses would probably turn out to be utterly unlike in character and it would be useless to put them together.

There are, however, certain general principles now followed by all scientific modern trainers, namely:

That free forward movement should be the first aim of the trainer; this is the easiest exercise for the horse and the least trying to his temper. He thus learns to accustom himself to the new conditions (*i. e.*, carrying a weight above and behind his center of gravity) in the easiest possible manner, and acquires freedom of action at the same time, before any interference with his movements can have put him in any doubt as to what his rider requires of him. Good fast walkers are not as common as they should be, and one of the reasons for this may well be that in their anxiety for results

trainers generally try collected work too soon when the horse is mounted.

Another principle is that the animal must be taught to move his neck forward as well as backward at the will of his rider, or he will not answer to the term "balanced." He must learn to break into a canter or gallop from a walk, to jump freely, to collect himself suddenly, and to turn on his hocks. This may be termed the second part of his training, in which the correct and frequent use of the leg in combination with the lightest of hands is everything. Theoretical knowledge, though essential if the trainer is to achieve success in this second part, is useless without practical experience. A corollary to this second principle is that the horse must learn to answer at once to the bridle without either fighting it or running back from it. A third principle is that the animal must never be overtired; a "stale" horse can learn nothing.

Some experts advise beginning the work on foot, teaching the horse to answer first to a snaffle and then to a double bit by holding the reins above the withers. When necessary they employ a second man to stand behind the horse with a long whip in

order to prevent him from "running back from the bridle." The meaning of the leg is taught at the same time by taps with a cane on the animal's side. As long as this method is confined to teaching him the meaning of the bridle it answers well.

Baucher, the great master of Haute Ecole, introduced a system of training on foot the basis of which was to supple the horse's head and neck in such a manner that when first mounted he would move collectedly. Fillis, a disciple of Baucher's, improved upon the latter's methods by insisting on a higher, though still a practically perpendicular carriage of the head. The two main features of the system advocated by these high-school riders may be classed under the heads of direct flexion, *i. e.*, bending the horse's head in towards his chest, and lateral flexion, *i. e.*, bending the upper part of the neck from one side to the other. I have endeavored to show in the section on "What to Teach" how the general utility of the animal will suffer if we train him to adopt an unnatural profile—that is to say, to move with his neck arched and his nose tucked in to an exaggerated extent, and would here warn the reader who wishes to use direct flexion that

he should do very little of it, and that only in the second stage of the horse's education.

Baucher worked at direct flexion with the horse stationary at first and then reining back; Fillis insisted that the horse should move forward during the whole of every lesson. His methods, which are more complicated than Baucher's, require some explanation. Both reins of the snaffle are held in the right hand under the horse's chin, and a whip is held in the left hand. The horse's head is pushed upwards and forwards as he moves on, the whip being used when necessary. The exercise must at first be carried out at the side of a school or wall, or the animal will not be under control. When the horse walks freely in this manner, the snaffle reins are held in front and close to the nose in the left hand, and the curb reins behind the chin on the right. The horse is then pulled forward by the left hand and his nose kept in by the right, an assistant using the whip when necessary in rear. This exercise, which Baucher carried out with the horse stationary, is intended to supple the lower jaw as well as the neck.

The object of lateral flexion is to train the horse

when ridden to maintain a high carriage of the head in turning and circling, and to incline it in the direction in which he is moving. It is taught by raising the horse's head and pulling it round from side to side. Enthusiasts claim that no horse will turn properly unless he has been through a course of this exercise, but we may take it that this bigoted view will not stand examination; most of us having ridden extremely handy animals whose trainers had never so much as heard the word flexion.

The great objection to specifying any length of time for working on foot is that we are not giving the horse any lesson in his most important duty, which is to balance himself with a weight on his back, although having learnt to move bridled with his head high will eventually make this easier for him; nor are we taking any steps to develop the muscles that are needed for carrying weight. The whip, even in the hands of an expert, cannot have the same educational value as the application of the leg.

If the trainer works mounted, he can raise the horse's head by raising his hands and pressing with his legs, and if it is required he can bring the nose

in by holding the snaffle-rein high and the curb low.

It is as well to work the colt by himself;[1] he will pay more attention to the trainer, and it is not easy to get good work out of a "difficult" horse unless he is alone. This results not only from the imitativeness of all young things and their interest in what is being done by others, but also from the gregariousness which is one of the strongest natural characteristics of the equine race, and which prompts its members to seek their fellows' company and to shun independent action. For this reason, when it is necessary to work young horses together they should never be allowed to follow each other closely.

When the horse is first mounted, which should be done with the greatest care, he should be led along by a man on foot; if he shows any disinclination to move forward he should be turned either to the right or to the left: everything should be done to keep on friendly terms with him. As de

[1] The Italians and the Boers couple the young horse to an old one by means of a rope or a strong leather strap. This is attached to both headstalls, the horses' heads being about a yard apart. This procedure is only admissible when the young horse comes "wild" into the trainer's hands, which is often the case both in Italy and South Africa.

Mauléon remarks, if he will not do a thing in one way, another should be tried. The horse should be led by a head-collar, and not by the bridle, and as soon as he goes quietly he should be let go, the man continuing to walk by him for a time. He should now be given full liberty of rein, and encouraged to "walk out" before it is attempted to make him go light in front, which cannot be done without the help of the bridle.

When trotting lessons are begun one important point should be borne in mind if equal work is to be done by the horse's hind legs. The Germans lay great stress on this distribution of work for long-distance riding; and amongst Frenchmen, Captain Caubert, in his deep and scientific work "Du Cheval bien mû et bien mis," goes very fully into it. I will endeavor to explain it as simply as possible.

When a horse trots, his near fore and off hind strike the ground at the same time and *vice versa*. In rising to the trot, the rider's weight is always lifted out of the saddle by the straightening of one particular hock. This in time becomes stiff and tired, unless the rider occasionally allows himself to bump twice instead of once in the saddle and shifts

the work on to the horse's other hind leg, which will greatly relieve the animal and enable him to travel further without distress.

Opinions differ as to when a horse should be taught to rein back. The exercise forms part of every trainer's curriculum, but Fillis, and de Lisle (who follows his methods), would leave it until the rest of the training is completed, whilst other experts would commence with it. Fillis says that backing a horse has the effect of putting his hind legs further away from him, but this is not the fact if the animal is made to rein back with his head up. De Lisle says that reining back may make a horse chary of facing the bit, but many masters of the "great saddle," who rode in terribly severe bits, and demanded great flexion at the poll, do not seem to have been troubled in this respect. Doubtless the horse can be "made" whichever course the reader may wish to pursue; the following advantages, however, are derived from early instruction in this exercise. It is the best lesson for teaching a horse to get back on his hocks, and to turn on them, which cannot be done without weighting the pivot; the retrograde movements of the hind legs

strengthen important muscles of the back and loins, and as a preparation for the canter and for jumping it will often be found extremely useful. My experience goes to prove that if a horse is kind and willing it is unwise to forego these benefits, which are so valuable to the trainer.

It is as well to give the first few lessons in reining back on foot, the horse's head being at first held low in order to lighten his quarters; if he shows any marked disinclination to move, the trainer should tread on each of his fore fetlocks in turn (Fillis). It is not an uncommon thing to see a trainer in difficulties with a young horse the first time he tries to rein him back mounted, which is easily explained. Not only has the horse to lift his hind legs while bearing an unaccustomed weight, but this weight is increased by the animal's head being held high.

When the horse has learnt to carry himself lightly at a walk and a trot he must be taught to passage and turn on his hocks. It is advisable to begin these exercises dismounted and to use a cane as a substitute for the leg. This is diametrically opposed to the teaching of Hayes, who would have turning on the hind legs taught last, but I maintain

that it is correct. Turning in this manner is not only the most useful one for the rider, as the horse pivots on the point of the turn, but when once learnt it is the safest and easiest for the horse, and is a good lesson in balance. Hayes seems to have been opposed to it because he thought it likely to irritate the horse in the early days of his training, but by exercising great patience and gentleness the trainer must prevent this. The polo pony is, of course, useless unless he can turn on his quarters at a gallop, and every other riding horse is safer when he can do the same.

The animal must learn to pivot on every leg, but it comes natural to him to turn on his forehand unless he is in a confined space; he therefore requires more teaching to swing on his hocks. The trainer should make use of the inclination of the body to "fix" the pivot.

Unless they are moving on a circle all horses when cantering have a leading or favorite leg like human beings: they should be taught to go on either, and to change the leading leg readily either at the will of the rider or when circumstances dictate it; it is, for instance, unsafe if a cantering horse suddenly goes

from a right-hand circle to a left-hand one and does not at once change legs and lead with the inner one, as he is liable to cross his legs and come down. It will be necessary to decide on the quickest and best way of accomplishing this important part of the horse's education. He may be taught either to strike off on a particular leg when given certain indications, and thus be made handy on both, or he may be worked on the circle with the awkward leg leading, the circle being gradually enlarged until he gets into the way of using this leg on the straight, after which it will be easy to teach him to change.

Having got the animal to canter on either leg, he may soon be taught to change legs by the movement of the rider's body, by working him on a large figure-of-eight. Let us, for example, take it that we are riding on the first circle to the right; at the point where we wish to enter the second circle the body should be swung to the left, and at the same time the right rein and right leg applied. The horse should be given a good kick with the right heel, and if this does not have the required effect he should be sharply rapped on the right side with the cane. Very soon the indications given by the hand and leg

can be dispensed with. This system of training is carried out to perfection at the Messrs. Miller's school at Rugby. Care must be taken that the movement of the body is not exaggerated, or the horse will lose his balance and will change in front only instead of in front and behind. The figure-of-eight should not be attempted until the horse canters collectedly.

The aid and indications given at the end of the instructional exercises must be amplified according to the nature of the horse under training; for example, a well-balanced, keen animal will not require the hand and leg work that will be necessary on an ill-balanced slug.

Both hands may have to be raised[1] to make a horse "stop" in a collected manner, but I am loath to lay down any definite rules to suit all horses. If the trainer will keep in his mind's eye the fact that when a horse is finished he must be able to answer to the aid and the indications given in the instructional exercises, he is better left to his own manner of arriving at the result, always providing that he has a thorough knowledge of the business.

[1] Some writers say that you should lower both hands.

On the European Continent great stress is laid on the physical training of the horse, for the purpose of ensuring all-round and even muscular development. Without question the principle is sound, and the trainer should carry it out by systematically practising circles, turns, passaging, and reining-back, as soon as his charge is sufficiently advanced. No lesson should be abandoned because it is learnt. Jumping, either at liberty or mounted, is the best possible exercise for all-round physical development.

ment. Some of the jumps should be broad, in order to oblige the horse to use his shoulders freely. If he does nothing but collected work and high jumping he is likely to lose his full powers of extension, however much these may have been developed in the early stages of his education.

XXII

JUMPING

XXII

JUMPING

"She shortened her long stroke, she pricked her sharp ears,
She flung it behind her with hardly a rap . . . . . "

LINDSAY GORDON.

IF a horse has had the advantage of a jumping-lane education in early youth, a light-weight can ride him over low obstacles at once, and very little trouble will be found in turning him out as good a fencer as his make and disposition will allow of, if his mouth is not ill-treated during the process. "Natural fencers" are often spoken of, but it may be taken that such horses have jumped in early colthood for pleasure, or, if they come from Ireland, have learnt to do so for the purpose of getting from field to field on a farm; the animal that has never had any opportunity of practising fencing until he is four or five years old requires schooling. I do not agree with Whyte Melville that not one hunter in fifty really likes jumping, and believe that many

enjoy it if not jobbed in the mouth and given too much of the exercise.

The beginner must be taught to stand off and jump well out. Getting too much under the fence and landing on his shoulders are faults which are very common in the young horse. For this reason the first few lessons should be over an obstacle that is broad at the top; either two hurdles bunched together of the sort shown in Fig. 5 or the trunk of a large tree, the latter having the advantage that a horse will never try to go through it. The youngster should not be allowed to jump fast, whether he is worked on foot or ridden, until he has learnt to get his hocks well under him. Many people commence with a single rail. Dick Christian (born 1779), a celebrated trainer of hunters, always did this, but I am inclined to believe that it is not the shortest way to the end in view, for reasons that I have given above.

The trainer may well begin on foot, and use any of the appliances already mentioned; excellent results can, however, be obtained in a school without them. Lead the horse up to the obstacle and jump it yourself alongside of him; after a few times it

will be found that he will jump by merely being led up to the fence, the reins in this case being knotted to shorten them and left on the animal's neck. A mouthful of corn or a carrot should be the reward for each performance.

As soon as the horse jumps readily with a man on his back, wings should be dispensed with. This is important, as the horse is thus taught that he must take the place selected by his rider, and that he is under complete control. After a sound preparation, there is no better practice for the young horse than taking him slowly across country, at first over gaps, then over low fences; and if some of them have a bad take-off, so much the better.

To make the animal safe and certain over timber and water requires systematic training, too often neglected in England, to the detriment of the horse's market value. It has always seemed to me that the difficulty timber presents to a young horse is owing to the fact that the lowest bar is some way off the ground, so that he finds nothing to guide him in taking off when he looks down to measure the distance. I have discovered that commencing with a guard-rail in front of the obstacle overcomes the

difficulty, the rail being placed nearer and nearer to the jump as he becomes accustomed to it, and eventually removed. As far as water is concerned, hunters often make a great fuss about less than six feet of it, a width they could cover in their stride without effort. The brook or ditch cannot be too small, or be ridden at too slowly to begin with; it is everything to establish the animal's confidence at once, and the pace should be gradually increased as the width of the obstacle grows. Should the youngster refuse even to approach water, he should be led up to it with a crupper leading-rein.

I am a believer in teaching young horses to jump wire, not necessarily for after use, but by way of giving them a good eye for measuring distance. I only know of one disadvantage to the practice, which is that if a horse gets tied up in wire it frightens him considerably, but a good deal of experience has convinced me that the effects are not lasting, and he quickly learns to regard this class of obstacle with respect. For instructional purposes it can be made in the following manner. Two uprights fixed on to heavy stands are drilled to take three or four strands of wire and placed at a suit-

able distance apart. The wires are run through the posts and terminate in weights to keep them taut, which should hang low enough to allow of a certain amount of play if the horse hits the wire. The top strand rests on deeply-grooved pulleys on the top of each post, and should also be weighted. The jump should be low at first, and if two or three sticks are twisted in and out of the strands in an upright position the horse will be assisted in measuring the obstacle until he comes to understand its nature. I have conclusively proved that any riding horse worthy of the name can be taught to jump wire.

I strongly advocate sending young horses to the covert-side a few times before even asking them to follow hounds; in this way they will more easily learn to stand still and not fidget. When entered to real hunting they should be taken straight away to the front and kept there if possible, to prevent their being demoralized by seeing refusals in front of them; this should be quite practicable if the preliminary training has been thorough.

Show jumping is a special business, which found but little favor in England before the days of the International Horse Show. It is true that jumping

competitions have been held for some years at most of the agricultural shows, but the successful horses have generally done little else from year to year but travel round the country picking up money prizes, and few *bona fide* hunters have competed. Without arguing at length the practical educational value of making a horse into a show-jumper, I would ask the reader whether he would care to ride a hunter who was in possession of the fact that every fence in the country could be chanced with impunity. That the show-jumper is aware of it when he performs in the ring was well illustrated during the first few days especially of the 1909 International Horse Show at Olympia (London). Had the fences been solid there would, without exaggeration, have been at least a hundred falls a day, and some of them really dangerous ones. It is true that most of the foreign animals entered were said to be "cross-country" horses, but this nearly always means that they can negotiate a course of made fences, which much experience has taught them the evil effects of chancing.

At San Sebastian (Spain) later in the year the jumps were of a different caliber, and although in

some cases fantastic and unnatural many of them could not be chanced. The chief obstacle in the course was a combination of high bank and fly fence with a ditch. The competitor had first to jump the fence and then the ditch on to a sloping bank ten feet high. After scrambling up this bank he was confronted with a four-foot ledge and then another ten-foot bank. The top was about eight feet broad and an almost perpendicular drop of nearly twenty feet completed a very formidable obstacle, which taxed the pluck and tendons of the horses very highly.

Height and not length has till recently been the usual characteristic of the obstacles at International horse shows, and to jump height the animal must learn to be an excellent judge of where to take off, and must get right back on his hocks before he does so. One of the best trick-jumpers I ever saw would always refuse if he did not get into his proper stride, sooner than go through the fence; yet although he refused, he was quite ready to have another try without any punishment or coercion. It was palpable that he refused in the same way as

a man who stops when he has misjudged his run at a high jump.

Some horses require to be put back on their hocks, and jump better in a double bit; others, like the celebrated "All Fours," collect themselves of their own accord and perform best with a slack rein: they can see what they are doing and measure their distance better with their heads free.

A placid disposition is a valuable asset in a show-jumper; the education can scarcely fail to irritate many temperaments. Both horse and man require special training. The man must, amongst other things, learn to lean well forward on landing, and the horse's training must be of two sorts. Firstly, continual up-and-down-hill work—the steeper the better—at first at a walk and then at a canter, for the purpose of muscle development. This can be obtained by continual jumping, but it is apt to sicken the horse and make him shin-sore. Secondly, special training in high jumping over those fancy obstacles which are never met with out of the show-ring. The difficulty of teaching high jumping is that it must, if possible, be done without giving the horse falls, as in coming down from a height of, say, six feet, he

Plate XXIV.—Training a High Jumper
W. A. Rouch, 161 Strand

is very apt to hurt himself; I have seen more than one injured shoulder from this cause.

One way to set about it is to have a man at each end holding the bar on the rests, or a second bar maintained at the same height, and to jump the horse firstly at liberty and then with a man on his back. If he clears the bar well, the men holding it should do nothing, but if it is a near thing they should endeavor to jerk the bar up and down again, so as to rap the horse on the fetlocks. It is not a very difficult thing to do with a little practice. In at least one country abroad where they are famous for their high jumpers, it is not an uncommon practice to cover the bar with leather containing sharp tacks, point outwards. This plan is more effective and does not make refusers, but it is barbarous, and we may be thankful that it is unlawful in England. The bar is, of course, let go by the holders if the horse is likely to fall from jumping too low.

Some horses are cunning enough quickly to associate the presence of the men in the vicinity of the jump with the correction of the bar, and will immediately chance the fence if they are absent. This difficulty can be overcome if the bar is worked by

pulleys and ropes from a distance, as is now almost invariably done on the Continent. The pulleys are attached to strong upright posts at each end of the fence, and the pole is sunk slightly below its top, in such a manner as to be invisible from the taking-off side.

The disadvantage of the above method of training is that the effect is seldom lasting, and that the punishment—such as it is—must often be administered. A horse remembers a fall at a natural fence and dislikes it extremely, and he generally takes every care that it shall not happen again if he can help it. But if the obstacles are fancy ones, he seems instinctively to know exactly what may be chanced and what may not. This was well illustrated at the International Horse Show of 1909, where the walls, although collapsible, had a solid appearance and did not fall at a mere touch, being accordingly treated with greater respect than any other obstacles in the ring.

The piano jump, three rails in a line, and other special obstacles must be made small at first, or when necessary only half put up, and the horse sent over them with nobody on his back until he understands what is required of him.

Training the horse to go down what is almost a precipice, a special feature of Italian show riding, must be taught by degrees, the pace of the horse and the slope and length of the declivity being increased as the horse gets accustomed to balancing himself. The Italians have now trained their horses to go up a steep narrow bank, jump a wall on top, and then immediately descend a steep incline. This sounds alarming, but to a great extent careful training eliminates accidents.

XXIII

REFUSERS

XXIII

REFUSERS

"Yet I must tell you, the rarest *Leaping* Horse that ever I saw, or Rid, went not at all upon the Curb, but only upon the *Barrs* of his *Mouth*, which I do not commend; but it is better to have him *Leap* so, being so rare a horse, than to be so Over-Curious as not to have him *Leap* at all, because he went not upon the Curb."

NEWCASTLE.

AFTER reading the above quotation the reader will perhaps agree with me that the Duke either did very little jumping, or was extraordinarily lucky in only finding one horse that objected to leaping on the curb; there is no surer way of manufacturing a refuser if the animal's mouth and chin are not past all feeling.

Horses refuse for various reasons, and it is useless to attempt to cure them of the habit until we have ascertained the cause. A well-known writer has said that it takes two years to make a horse and about half-an-hour to spoil him, and we may safely go this far with him: that a good jumper can be ruined in a very short time, and that the trouble and

work which will be required to get him back to his true form cannot be measured with accuracy. The refuser is of little value either to the hunting man or to the exhibitor of show jumpers, so that the prevention and cure of this exasperating fault is a matter of the first importance to them.

A horse may refuse for any of the following reasons, or from a combination of several.

1. From having been previously jobbed in the mouth on landing (Plate XXV), thus receiving severe punishment for obeying his rider's wishes. If the job in the mouth is severe the horse receives the additional punishment of jarring his hindquarters on landing, as they come to the ground too soon and are not adapted for bearing weight as are the forelegs.

2. Being accidentally spurred during any phase of the jump—another punishment for obedience.

3. Insufficient elementary schooling; the horse will refuse because he does not know what is required of him.

4. Not having sufficient head-room when he poises his body to spring.

5. Want of heart in the rider, which is so easily communicated through the reins.

Plate XXV.—Interference with the Mouth on Landing

6. Want of heart in the horse if the fence is big.

7. Seeing other horses refuse in front of him.

8. Lameness either in front or behind, or a strained back.

9. Sore back.

10. Badly-fitting saddle.

11. Ill-fitting or too severe a bridle.

12. Sickened by too much jumping.

13. Vice.

14. Finding that he has miscalculated his distance and has to take off too soon or too late; the horse often prefers to refuse if he can, rather than fall (see page 279).

I have seen horses refuse from all these causes: let us, in so far as is practicable, discuss the remedies, eliminating those refusers who require attention from a veterinary surgeon, and also those who belong to such callous masters as will not study their horse's comfort in the matter of his furniture.

Horses have such retentive memories that only if victory is certain is a pitched battle to be thought of, and even then it is bad policy. I do not wish by this to imply that corrective punishment is not sometimes

necessary, but it is better applied when we are working on foot and are assured of mastery and obedience, and only then if a resolute pair of hands and legs and a touch of whip and spur have failed of their effect. Patience and untiring effort is the secret of success with a refuser, be he young or old, if the result is to be satisfactory and the lesson a lasting one.

If the horse refuses because he has been punished in the mouth, jump him without reins over very low obstacles, which should gradually be raised; then use reins attached to a thick smooth snaffle. I have seen a horse, who had been refusing for half-an-hour, jump at once simply because the curb bit was removed from his mouth, although up to then no pressure had been put upon it. If for any reason jumping without reins cannot be undertaken, it is best to dismount and put on a crupper leading-rein (described in the section devoted to appliances, page 231). After the horse has jumped with this appliance, which assuredly he will, feed him with a mouthful of carrot or other delicacy; rest him a little, and then ride him over the fence; if he again refuses, repeat the performance.

We cannot make a coward brave, whether he be man or horse, but we can sometimes oblige him to do what he fears by strongly impressing upon him the evil consequences of resistance. A resolute rider with a sharp pair of spurs will often make up a horse's mind for him, but he can never cure him of the tendency to refuse, for the simple reason that the coward, from his very nature, will take the first opportunity of finding the rider off his guard to balk again, especially if the obstacle be at all formidable. Working on foot, either with a light cavesson, long reins, or the crupper leading-rein, may improve this class of animal, as jumping without a weight on his back inspires confidence in the performer, but I should strongly advise the owner to sell him on the first opportunity.

A refuser from any of the causes we are now discussing, who "runs out" when going at a fence, generally does so on one particular side. This can sometimes be stopped by showing him the whip on that side, or by a course of bending the neck to the other, the side which he stiffens to oppose you: in fact, using lateral flexions (see page 259).

Horses that refuse from vice come under an

altogether different category, and often repay perseverance and patience beyond the trainer's expectations. Punishment with the whip or spurs generally increases the trouble, so we must look for other means of enforcing mastery and obedience. Here again we must go back to elementary work; the obstacles cannot be too low to commence with, and bran and not corn is the best food for the delinquent until he has seen the error of his ways. His corn must afterwards be regulated, little being allowed at first, and the quantity gradually increased. It is waste of time trying to cure vice if the horse is above himself. The animal can be thrown immediately after the refusal (see page 235 on Appliances), with his head facing the jump and about ten yards from it; he should be held down for five minutes or so with his head slightly raised off the ground, and then taken at the fence again. Another way of treating him is to place him in front of the jump and tie up one foreleg, keeping him in this position until he is tired. Any of the appliances mentioned for coercing a coward may be used in conjunction with these two punishments. As soon

as the horse gives in we must make much of him and give him some delicacy.

Doubtless some horses will jump when hounds are running that will not do so in cold blood, but those who urge that the way to cure a refuser is to take him to the front out hunting forget that the rider should always be in command, and not be subject to the caprice of his mount. A horse should not be allowed in the field until he will jump willingly in cold blood. One disadvantage of trying to cure this vice out hunting is that when the animal does refuse, —and I have ridden horses myself thathave" turned it up" in the middle of a run after having gone well, and with nothing forbidding in front of them— the rider cannot assure himself of victory, as he has nothing but his whip and spurs to help him. He may be kept in the same field for half a day and still fail, a very serious matter as far as curing the horse is concerned.

If the worst comes to the worst, the despairing rider who has seen the hunt fade from his sight may generally get his horse to jump a moderately-sized fence, and so gain a hollow victory, if he dis-

mounts and pulls the animal over by the reins, lengthened by the addition of the whip-thong.

Except with very young horses, it is best not to allow them a lead over a fence, as it is in a sense a moral support, and if we pander to them in this respect we cannot expect boldness—the most valuable characteristic in the jumper; and, I might also add, an indispensable one in the horseman.

Horses are seldom fit for really hard work before they are six years old, and we in England should do well to follow Continental nations a little more in this matter. In the English Cavalry Training Manual of 1904 it was laid down that the trainer should aim at making his horse as handy as a polo pony, as clever as a hunter, and as quiet as a shooting pony. The ideal is an excellent one, and seldom impossible if the training is scientific.

THE END.

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